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PEP

New, Snappy, Spicy Stories



JUNE, 1935

SNAPPY STORIES

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PEPPY PALS



NOTICE:—No letter will be published unless the writer gives permission to print his or her full name and address.—The Editor.

Dear Editor:

I have just finished my first copy of *Pep* stories and I read every word. Nothing dull in reading this. Am especially interested in your *Peppy Pals* column. Will you print my letter asking for pen pals? Especially would like to hear from men, as I am interested in outdoor life, photography, music, camping and motoring, and I need a pal who likes the same things and will exchange snapshots. Will promise a letter to anyone who sends in their first letter. I am 30 years old, 5 ft. 8 in. tall, black hair, green-brown eyes. Won't you write?

Eben Boyce.

Middlesex, Vermont.

Dear Editor:

I have been reading your stories in the *Pep* book for quite a while, and sure do enjoy them. As I have lots of spare time, would like to have some pen pals. I am 21 years of age, have brown hair and eyes, and a fair complexion. Come on, boys and girls, and give me a fair trial. Hoping to see this in print real soon I am, your booster,

Bessie Griffith.

321 South Mulberry St., Hagerstown, Md.

Dear Editor:

I have been an enthusiastic reader of your magazine for over a year and I want to say your magazine is good.

I would like for you to print this in your *Peppy Pals* department and help me find pen pals.

Here is my description, 5 ft. 11 in. tall, weight 138 pounds, blue eyes, brown hair, male.

Please print this for me, and I would like to hear from Thelma Gorsuch.

Sincerely,

Crawford Crow.

5 D Street, Inman, S. Car.

Dear Peppy Pals:

For several months I have been an ardent reader of your delightful magazine and I have enjoyed every issue immensely.

I would like very much to exchange letters and photographs with some of your other readers. I will answer every letter and send a photo of myself to everyone who writes.

I'm six feet tall, considered good looking by my shipmates; but in spite of their comradeship I find life rather lonely, especially when we are at sea for a long time.

Hoping to see this in the next issue of your magazine and to hear from some of your fair readers soon, I am,

Very truly yours,

Howard R. Minkler.

U. S. M. C., Marine Detachment, U. S. S. Saratoga, San Pedro, Calif.

Dear Editor:

I have read many "*Pep Stories*" and I honestly enjoyed every one. I don't get them in rotation, but I manage to have them now and again. Strangely enough I have just completed the March, 1934, issue. There I saw a letter which intrigued me. It was signed "*Elsie A.*" and she mentioned "*Franciose De Lahre*" of Lansing, Michigan. Would these two write to me and swap some experiences, which we have in common. I promise interesting letters to all who write.

Please Editor, be a good guy and print this appeal, and I want any girl reading this to write to me. I would like to hear from some girl *peppy* pals from all over the world.

Believe me, I'll answer all letters received. So Editor, print my full address, and I'll stand by with my pen and a copy of "*Pep*".

I'm an assistant electrician, 22 years old, black hair, brown eyes 5 ft. 5 in. in height.

— Yours appreciatingly,

Emlyn Jenkins.

92 Wern Street, Clydach Vale, Tonypanyd, Glamorgan South Wales.

(Please turn to page 58)

HOLD YOUR MAN!

THE party in Avery Van Wyck's penthouse apartment was just on the verge of breaking up. The little peroxide blonde, who earlier in the evening had danced

By
KEN
COOPER



"You're going to see me again, honey, aren't you?" Fay murmured.

on the piano in a bras and panties, was draped across one arm of an overstuffed chair, both pink tipped breasts lolling almost outside the confines of her disarranged bandeau.

Van Wyck's pride and joy—Sonya, the lean, lissome artist's model—was stretched out on the chaise lounge, her black satin dress bunched up about her knees, twin thighs visible in their alabaster velvet splendor.

At the door, Chauncey Evans tilted his black fedora back on his head and once more kissed Fay Vaughn good-bye. Chauncey—"Chuck" to his intimates—had no idea who or what the redhead's name was. He had dropped in on the Van Wyck party in a partial state of alcoholic happiness, and was leaving

in an advanced state which almost bordered on inebriation.

However, there were a few things he did know. He knew the redhead had a figure composed of a galaxy of curves all contrived to form a Venus de Milo perfection. He knew the easily removable inset bodice of her gown offered scant protection to the most firmly jellied breasts it had ever been his pleasure to contact. He knew her lips were warm and damp and habitually parted.

"You're going to see me again, honey, aren't you?" Fay murmured purringly, twining her arms about Chuck's neck and plaster-

ing her undulating curves close to him. Fay knew a good thing when she saw it. Avery Van Wyck's friends had money. This one looked like he had lots of it. And lots was needed to keep Fay in lace panties and cobweb thin hosiery. Not to mention dresses, furs, etc.

Van Wyck tried to disengage them, but unsuccessfully. "Let him go," he mumbled. "He's gotta go home to his wife. Wives raise holy hell!"

Fay's eyes narrowed. So, on top of it all, he was married. Better yet. Errant husbands were Fay's forte. Holding Chuck by one hand she led him back into the room, found a pencil and piece of paper, jotted down her name and address and slipped it into his jacket pocket.

"Don't forget, sweet," she whispered. "My address is in your pocket. I'll be expecting a call from you tomorrow."

Chuck nodded wearily. At the moment he was thinking about Alice, in bed at home. Through the penumbra of his intoxication he could see her standing in the foyer waiting for him, sore as hell.

His fingers brushed against Fay's breasts. Alice's weren't as firm, nor as pointed. Nice, though.

"Good night, sweetheart." Once again Fay fastened her squirming mouth on his. Then Van Wyck got him out into the hall and on an elevator.

"S'long, Chuck," he mumbled.

Chuck licked his lips, succulently sweet from Fay's scented rouge. "S'long," he echoed.

ALICE EVANS LISTENED to the minute noises of the night as she lay awake waiting for the sound of a key grating in the lock. The illuminated dial of her vanity clock told her the time. Three o'clock and Chuck still out.

"A little business deal with Avery Van Wyck," he had said over the phone. "Probably keep me until after midnight."

Business deal! Alice said the words aloud, surprised as her own voice echoed through the dark room. More than likely a wild party at Van Wyck's penthouse. Why was this happening to her? Had she been a bad wife . . . an unreasonable companion? Was there something lacking in her, or was it just the usual thing for men to stray away from the fold after ten years? Ten years! It seemed like such a long time. Ten years! And yet she could remember vividly the night Chuck had

first kissed her. Three months later they were married. She was eighteen then. Now she was twenty-eight.

Her fingers strayed wonderingly over the soft chiffon of her pajama top, burrowed into the low neckline and felt her breasts. Were they any different now than they had been at eighteen? Her hand cupped the fullness of one, lifted it tenderly. Yes, they were more mature, more rounded. At eighteen her breasts had been hard and small. At eighteen her hips had been slim and boyish. Now her breasts were round with the velvet softness of maturity, her hips curved in full fashioned arcs.

But she was still firm and lovely. Her eyes were blue-bright and her lips damp and swollen. There were no tell-tale lines radiating from the corners of her mouth, no flabby double chins nor sagging rolls of fat about her hips. She had seen to it carefully. Diet and massage and activity had done it for her. Still, what was the use? It was three o'clock and Chuck still out. Toying with another girl of eighteen, probably. Fondling breasts that were hard and small, running his fingers over hips that were young and nubile.

Curiously, she remembered an article she had read in the Woman's Section of the paper that very afternoon. *How To Hold Your Man*. There were a lot of instructions. Some of them seemed funny now. *Stay young! Keep looking attractive! Don't go into a decline!* Funny—very funny! *Stay young!* That was more amusing than anything else. Might as well say hold back the years. Stay eighteen! Stay eighteen, with hard, pointed breasts and slim hips. Never become twenty-eight, because twenty-eight brings roundness and fullness to your breasts and hips. Men like eighteen—

The familiar grating of a key in a lock broke the train of her thought. Chuck! The vanity clock said 3:20. She held her breath as he closed the door softly. There would be no argument, no demonstration tonight. She was through with trying to make him understand that way. She closed her eyes and faked sleep as he tip-toed into the room.

She opened her eyes and saw the bulk of his back. Ten years ago it had been different. He would cradle her into his arms far into the night, fondling her breasts with the delicate touch of a lover, brushing her lips with tantalizing butterfly caresses. But now—because she was twenty-eight—he ignored her. She wanted desperately to reach out and entwine him with her arms, to press her aching body close, to tell him how her heart bled.

But instead, she waited patiently until the rhythm of his breathing announced sleep. Then she stole from bed, and for the first time in her life, went through his pockets.

As she did it, sensitive to every sound from

further eased the situation by slipping a bill into the palm of his hand.

"Just tell her it's a message from Mr. Evans," she said. "She'll understand."

Evidently Fay did understand. Minutes

"If you can't hang on to a man, you deserve to lose him!" she snapped.



the bed, she consoled herself. *Hold Your Man* the newspaper article had said. She was trying to . . . feverishly.

THE DESK CLERK AT THE Hotel Williston was mildly suspicious of anyone who desired to see Fay Vaughn before three o'clock in the afternoon. It was one-thirty now.

Alice Evans charmed him with a smile and

later, Alice was knocking on the door of her room. From within came the patter of mules, the sound of a bolt slipping. The door opened. Alice gave Fay no time to recover from her astonishment. She slipped into the room and closed the door behind her. Fay, scantily clad in a flimsy negligee, backed to the bed.

"I'm Chuck Evans' wife," Alice announced calmly. "I'd like to talk things over with

you." She could not help making comparisons between this woman and herself. What was the great difference that Chuck saw? They were about the same height. Fay Vaughn's hair was red, her own was natural blonde. She looked at the carmine tipped breasts half revealed by the gaping negligee. Yes, they were firmer and smaller than her own twin charms, but the woman was younger. Young! Young! Young! The word throbbed through her mind.

Fay recovered from her momentary shock, found voice. Her hazel eyes flashed. "What right have you got busting in on me like this? Who do you think you are?" Her lips, still bearing traces of caked rouge, curled in a hard and contemptuous sneer.

"Every right in the world," Alice replied. "You're trying to steal my husband. I want to know why."

Fay eyed her with evident disdain, her hard pupils darting from the full swell of Alice's breasts to the woman curve of her hips. As though to flaunt her youth, she drew one side of her negligee away from the ivory column of a contoured thigh, touched the velvet flesh with her red tipped fingers.

"Yes, you have a nice body," Alice said bitterly. "You should have." Her breasts rose and fell emotionally. "But it won't last long. When you're my age you'll be wondering where those pointed breasts went and what happened to that slim thigh. You'll be asking yourself the same questions I do, but there won't be any answer. Men like my husband will pass you by because you'll be older and more mature." A hard laugh rippled from her lips.

Fay drew herself up, breasts pointed arrogantly. "I don't need any advice from you!" she snapped. "If you can't hang on to a man you deserve to lose him! Your husband doesn't mean this much to me!" She snapped her fingers. "He's just another man to play with . . . just a temporary angel. Now, get out!"

Alice backed to the door. "I'll hang on to my man," she said. "For all your sleekness, too!" She heard Fay Vaughn's deriding laugh out in the corridor. The points of her nails dug into her palms as she clenched her fists hard.

AVERY VAN WYCK was a spoiled spawn of the very prosperous post-war period. At thirty—via a five million dollar inheritance—he had more money than he knew what to

do with, and no interest in doing anything else but attempting to spend it. His life revolved around cocktail parties and women, with particular emphasis on the latter. He had no compunctions about his amorous affairs, either. As well the wife of his friend as the third from the left in the *Frivolities* chorus.

Alice was well aware of this as Van Wyck's Japanese valet admitted her to the penthouse apartment. The few times she had met Avery his covetous eyes had done strange things in the vicinity of her deep clefted breasts. She was counting on his interest now. It would be a desperate move, but Fay Vaughn's taunting challenge goaded her on.

The minutes of waiting in the ultra modern drawing room were anxious. Finally a door opened, and Avery Van Wyck, resplendent in a Chinese mandarin robe, entered the room. He rushed forward, hand outstretched.

"Alice Evans!" he greeted. "Certainly is a surprise to see you."

Alice rose, making every effort to hold herself erect, to win him over quickly with the lush maturity of her figure. His eyes shot to her breasts, full and white beneath a low cut silk blouse. She arched them with a long intake of breath, pushing their plump points through the material.

"Hello, Avery," she said sweetly.

He pressed her gloved hands. Alice swayed gently, causing her bosom to quiver gelatinously.

"It certainly is swell to see you!" he enthused. "You look marvelous. Younger every day. I envy Chuck."

"Chuck was here last night, wasn't he, Avery?" It was not an accusing question. Just a casual query, uttered in a low, throbbing voice.

Van Wyck flushed. "Er—yes—that is—er—we had a little business to talk over. You see, Chuck's handling some of my securities and—"

Alice smiled. "And some of your women. Isn't that it?" She hastened to put him at ease. "I'm not here with a wronged wife complaint, Avery," she said. "Frankly, I don't care whether Chuck has a dozen on the string." She brought her right hand under the swell of her breasts. "Two can play at that game, you know." The smile flitting about her damp lips had a "come hither" evanescence.

Avery breathed a sigh of relief. "I'm glad to hear you talk like that, Alice," he said. "It

shows you're broad minded. After all, a man will have his fun."

She stepped closer so that the perfume in the valley of her breasts could reach his nostrils. "So will a woman, Avery," she murmured.

His eyes pin-pointed as they dropped to her splendid bosom. He dropped her hands and slid his fingers up her arms.

"You don't mean—?" His unfinished query was expectant . . . eager.

Alice nodded. "Yes, I do mean! If you can

doing! I won't play corespondent for anybody!"

"I don't want you to play corespondent, Avery. I have another plan."

He shook his head. "I'll have no part of it!"

This was the crucial moment. Alice peeled off her gloves, removed her hat. "Avery," she said throatily. He turned and looked at



"You're caught with the goods, that's all, Mr. Evans," one of the men replied.

provide entertainment for my husband, you can provide entertainment for his wife."

By now his hands had reached her arm pits. The heels of them slid over to press against her breasts.

"But there's a catch, Avery," Alice said. "You've got to help me get a divorce. When I begin playing I want to play right . . . with absolute freedom."

He drew away, face clouded. "Nothing

her. His eyes brightened as they danced over her swelling breasts, heaving with theatrical emotion. Alice smoothed her dress over her hips and upper thighs. They were full and exciting. She undulated across to him, twining her arms about his neck. "You always wanted me, Avery," she murmured. "I've known it for a long time."

His hands fell on her hips as though to

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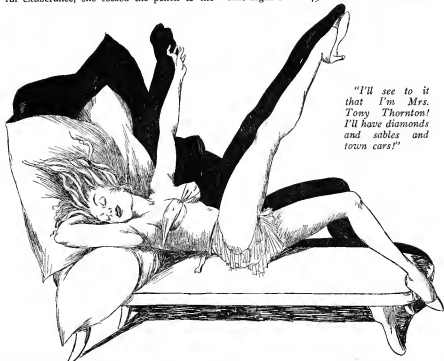
Oscar Dingleperfer!

By

PHYLLIS HOERNER

MARCIA DELMAR hung up the receiver of the telephone with a joyous bang and danced gaily across the room to her desk. She found a pencil and jotted down Tony Thornton's address on the note pad. Then, as an expression of her youthful exuberance, she tossed the pencil to the

gorgeous mansion at eight o'clock tonight! After that I'll see to it that I'm Mrs. Tony Thornton! I'll have diamonds and sables and beautiful town cars and fine big stables full of thoroughbreds and yachts! Oh, what a golden opportunity! This is a more significant night than 1492 when Columbus sailed



*"I'll see to it
that I'm Mrs.
Tony Thornton!
I'll have diamonds
and sables and
town cars!"*

ceiling, slammed the desk top down with a reverberating screech and danced back across the room, grasping her breasts in sheer delight and to keep them from wriggling with her twinkling toes. Throwing herself across the pink taffeta of her bed, she sang out loud: "Tony Thornton! Tony Thornton! I'm going to have dinner with Tony Thornton at his

the ocean blue to discover America . . . or was it 1493 when Columbus sailed the ocean blue!"

It was too glorious a moment to lie idle on the pink taffeta bed trying to remember the date Columbus discovered the new world. She jumped up and stepped out of her panties and unfastened her brassiere. Kicking up the

slim heels of her mules and flinging her slender arms above her golden head, Marcia caught a brief glimpse of her nude self in the triple mirrors of her vanity. She smiled alluringly at her reflection and her little feet tapped out intricate steps that she had done in the Vanity chorus. There was something abandoned and almost thrillingly depraved in whirling about a room naked, seeing three of her nude bodies reflected back to her . . . it was something that matched the wild thrills that surged through her veins.

"Money! Money! Money!" she cried at the mirror, bending down to kiss the lips that laughed when her lips laughed or drooped when her lips drooped. "You'll be rich, Marcia Delmar, darling . . . you'll be rich at last!"

There was a dewy nebulae on the cool slick surface of the mirror where Marcia's hot little mouth had kissed her reflection. She wiped the spot away now with her scarlet fingertips because she wanted to look at herself. She wanted to look at every bit of her beautiful nineteen year old self.

She moved a little back from the mirror and stared wistfully into it. She didn't actually see the blonde young girl, naked and white, with roses budding on her breasts and dark shadows flung beneath them by their rising prominence. She didn't see the long, slim legs, as smooth and silky as the mouth of a morning glory, as white as an aloe blossom. She didn't see the slender sloping shoulders and the graceful waist, nor the wide violet-blue eyes heavily fringed with dark lashes . . . all the darker because of the pale gold of her hair.

She saw instead the future Mrs. Tony Thornton in an expensive transparent velvet evening gown with a long prehensile train curling gracefully around her ankles and over her golden sandals studded with real jewels. She saw diamonds sparkling on her arms and on her fingers; she saw the coruscated sparks of them from her throat and ear lobes and set in a tiara on her golden head. She saw powder compacts in her purse, studded with real emeralds and a cigarette case and holder set with priceless sapphires.

She saw a butler helping her into a sable coat of matchless beauty and a doorman in a plum colored livery assisting her into a sleek black limousine. She saw herself speaking into a tube directing the chauffeur to take her to the Polish Embassy, The Embassy of Soviet Russia, even the White House, or

to wherever great personages had invited the beautiful and rich and young Mrs. Tony Thornton.

At last the vision faded and Marcia Delmar smiled widely, contentedly. She spoke aloud to her reflection now: "I have jewels," she said, gravely. "My eyes are truly sapphires, my teeth pearls, my lips garnets, my hair pure gold." She touched the forefingers of each hand to the red tips of her breasts. "And these," she whispered, almost in awe, "are my rubies . . . two glorious, precious, priceless, flawless rubies!"

When she danced away from the mirror to dress for dinner with Mr. Tony Thornton, her heart strings were playing a gay tune within her body. She glanced once or twice to the desk to make certain that she hadn't lost the magic address. And now the song rising from her heart to her throat poured from her lips in purest melody.

"It isn't the Spring, it's love in bloom . . ."

IT WAS FIFTEEN MINUTES of eight when Marcia turned in the driveway of the big mansion on Sixteenth Street and parked her little, shabby car under the pretentious portecochere. A butler very young and tall and dark . . . for all her excitement Marcia could not help but look at any male as handsome as this man, despite the fact he was but a servant! . . . opened the door to her. He didn't open the door all the way. He timidly opened just a crack; but even through that narrow opening Marcia could see the winding marble staircase and the prodigious stained glass window, Renaissance period, on the landing half way to the second floor.

She said in her thoughts: "This house and all that goes with it will soon be mine if I know my stuff . . . and my men!" And feeling confident and more sure of herself than she had ever been, she arched her breasts beneath the velvet cloak and the trailing chiffon dinner gown and said in her best company manner:

"Mr. Thornton, if you please."

She hadn't learned in her school of experience, from the bricklayer who had sired her, from the grand old Irishwoman who had been her mother, from any of those poverty stricken folks who lived on 4th Street where she had been born, that her card should have been placed on the silver tray in the fingers of the handsome young butler.

"Who is calling, madam?" the butler asked, his nose very high in the air.

"Wouldn't you like to know so you could tell all your friends who dined alone with Mr. Tony Thornton in his fine mansion!" she thought. But she said, "He's expecting me," and her voice disclosed her irritation because the door was not opened to her instantly; because the young butler stood there holding out the silver tray and looking down his nose at her.

When the young butler did not open the door Marcia glared fiercely at him. Then she pushed the door open herself, swept past him with her gardenia perfumes and scented powders trailing in her wake and marched proudly into the spacious drawing room. The butler followed her, coughing a little to attract her attention . . . hemming and hawing in his throat to let her know that he was directly behind her.

Marcia whirled on her slender spiked heel.

"Well . . . ?" she said. Though she did not move a muscle in her whole body, she was the perfect portrait of a young woman tapping an irritated toe, gritting her even tips of teeth, her hands on her hips, fish-wife fashion.

"Mr. Thornton is not at home, madam!" the butler said, firmly. "I do not expect him back until . . . well, I don't know when to expect him back. Probably not until tomorrow."

Marcia's nether lip curled.

"Oh, yeah? Well, Mr. Thornton asked me to dinner here tonight at eight o'clock, see? And if you don't know your business enough to be informed on the engagements of your master . . ." She hesitated for a second, then went on. "Skip it. Skip it. I'll wait for Mr. Thornton. I'll wait until he does come."

The butler bit his lip and frowned. Marcia could see that this decision of hers did not please him any more than Tony Thornton calling her and asking her to dinner at eight o'clock and then not being there pleased her. Even in her anger, Marcia was conscious once more of the handsome butler. She had never before seen a man so tall, so completely well built, so altogether desirable physically.

He *would* be a butler, she thought. Tony Thornton with all his wealth *would* be a fat little man and bald . . . he *would* have eyes that bulged in their sockets as if something were constantly frightening him. But a girl couldn't have money and . . . Her eyes roamed over the butler's youthful face and his slim, virile body. No, a girl couldn't have

everything. And Marcia Delmar after nineteen years of poverty knew what she wanted in life, *Tony Thornton and his money!*

The butler's eyes were doing some sweeping and roaming, too. While Marcia took off her wrap and handed it to him and patted her dress smooth and firm over her hips and breasts, his eyes did such a thorough job of sweeping that Marcia felt that his hot glance had swept away every thread of her clothing . . . as if she stood before him naked; her soul naked, too, showing him exactly what his roaming look could do to her senses.

HER HEART WAS RACING in her breast and her legs were trembling beneath her when she said, snappily:

"Well, there's my coat. What are you waiting for? Did you expect me to take off my dress, too?"

The butler flushed furiously. He said quickly, not thinking, "Yes, madam . . ." And then, seeing Marcia's wide, blue, insulted eyes, he went on, "Excuse me, madam. I meant . . . no, madam."

Marcia said:

"What's your name? Jeeves or some movie-sounding-butlerish name like that?"

He flushed again.

"My name is Oscar." His voice was almost an apology.

Marcia's quick laughter filled the big room. She sank to the deep sofa and slapped her legs lightly with her fingers.

"Oscar, eh?" And then she actually howled with pent-up mirth. "Gee, what a handle!" she added, inelegantly.

The young man continued, his eyes hurt, his voice grave.

"My full name is Oscar Dingleperfer."

"Dingleperfer? . . . Dingle-perfer?" Marcia didn't laugh aloud now but her eyes were full of amusement. "Imagine being *Mrs.* Oscar Dingleperfer. Imagine handing that name over store counters and telephones and hotel desks. Imagine the clerks trying to spell it!"

Now Oscar was standing very straight and a bit white lipped with resentment.

"There is no *Mrs.* Oscar Dingleperfer, madam. And I don't think you need imagine what it would be like or let it worry you, madam!" His voice dripped icicles.

Then he turned on his heel and left Marcia alone in the great drawing room.

That remark of Oscar's had hit Marcia straight between her two lovely blue eyes.

She sat up on the sofa watching Oscar hurry through the doorway, her mouth a little apart, her eyes wide and astonished. She thought: "Is that bird trying to tell me in a subtle way that he doesn't find me attractive? Was he trying to put me in my place? Well, we'll

her eyes. When she lifted the crystal goblet from the tray and held it against the light to admire its lush bright coloring, she did it in a way to show off her arms and figure, moving her big breasts beneath the tight bodice of her gown, ever so slightly, like sleepy kittens stirring beneath a silken coverlet. This feminine subtlety got Oscar Dingle-



"Well, there's my coat. What are you waiting for, did you expect me to take off my dress too?" she said.

just see about that . . . we'll just see about that!" She fumed inwardly.

IN A FEW MINUTES Oscar returned to the drawing room with a Perroquet flip on a little silver tray, saying, "You might get tired of waiting for Mr. Thornton, madam. I thought this drink might help your spirits and your disposition." Marcia let fall upon him for a second the amazing detonation of

perfer, too. He blinked his large, black passionate eyes once or twice and seemed unable to lift his gaze from her bosom.

Marcia drank the flip then, put the glass back on the tray and leaned languorously against the high arm of the antique sofa. Her breasts were strikingly large and uplifted in this pose and so straining against the tight chiffon bodice that the cherry tips showed very plainly through the material. She heard Oscar swallow hard and she saw the beads of perspiration break out on his forehead like a constellation of stars popping out on the blue sheet of night.

"I'm lonesome," Marcia purred, softly, looking at Oscar from beneath her long, drooping lashes. "Is there any rule of this house to prevent you from lingering a time and entertaining me, Oscar?" She waved to the sofa and the big open fire where the blaze pulsed brightly on the hearth. It was an enchanting place to chat. Marcia was, in accordance with her threat, *seeing about things!*

Oscar followed her to the sofa. He sat prim and very formal in his butler's uniform at one end of the divan while Marcia reclined at the other end, her golden head propped against the arm and a pile of satin pillows.

"Well," she began. "What shall we talk about?"

Oscar shrugged his broad shoulders.

"Mr. Thornton," he said, disregarding her question, "may not return until morning, madam."

Marcia narrowed her blue eyes. Was that a hint for her to leave or was it an opening for something more interesting? A lot could happen between nine o'clock at night and the dawning to a handsome dark young man like Oscar and a pretty blonde young woman like herself. Her heart began to beat rapidly and the blood began to swish through her veins, hot and fast.

Tony Thornton had no right to do this thing to her . . . standing her up . . . inviting her to his mansion to dinner and then not showing up. If she and Oscar indulged in a few thrilling moments, it would be just what Tony Thornton deserved. But that wasn't Marcia's real reason, no matter how much she tried to fool herself; that wasn't the reason her heart was rapid and her blood hot as molten lava in her veins! The reason, the real reason, was Oscar Dingleperfer himself! . . . Golly, what a name! . . . Oscar Dingleperfer, the most physically desirable young man she had ever seen, butler or no butler, Tony or no Tony. Her thoughts were pulsing in her brain; she wanted Oscar Dingleperfer . . . she wanted him more than she had ever wanted any man and that was saying a mouthful!

Oscar's thoughts at the moment were evidently along the same lines. His eyes were on Marcia's body, frankly desirous, and his fingers nervously locked and interlocked over his kneecap. At last he lifted his gaze to her face, an expression so utterly changed on his countenance that Marcia was almost frightened.

Oscar moved over to her then so quickly that Marcia hardly knew what was happening. All at once his mouth was on hers and his hands were traveling over her body, moving from one charm to the other and lingering not long on any one, as if he found them all so desirable and satisfying that he couldn't decide on which to concentrate his feverish attention. His hand plunged down the low neckline and encountered a white gleaming

breast set with its sparkling, precious, perfect, flawless ruby.

MARCIA DIDN'T REMEMBER what happened after that. Her brain pulsed, every nerve in her body trembled and ached. She experienced rapture on top of rapture. She sighed with the consummating reaction of his terrific love making.

The room was cold and the fire dead ashes on the hearth when she and Oscar finally drew apart. For a long while they remained on the sofa, side by side, saying nothing. For a long while they were content with their fingers interlaced, Oscar's head on her breast, their breathing slow and regular. It was a delicious stupor . . . a stupor neither would ever forget as long as they might live. When Oscar was a very old man he would remember this night on the sofa with Marcia and his blood, old and feeble in his veins, would stir and he would almost feel young again; and Marcia would never, even though her shoulders were bent and her hair as silver as the lining of the clouds, forget Oscar Dingleperfer.

It was Oscar who moved first and sat on the edge of the sofa, his dark head buried in the palms of his hands. It was Oscar who broke the enchantment of that stupor by speaking. He said, softly:

"I love you. I wonder if you'd care to marry me and make a permanent thing of this night?"

Marcia swallowed hard. She opened her eyes and looked around the room. She saw the house and the beautiful things artistically arranged throughout it; in her mind's eye she saw the jewel boxes on her dressing table that were overflowing with sapphires and pearls and diamonds. She saw chauffeurs and limousines and yachts. Then she saw Oscar Dingleperfer looking down at her, hopefully, anxiously. No, a girl couldn't have everything. She couldn't have Tony Thornton with his vast wealth and Oscar, too. Oscar had nothing . . . nothing. No, that was wrong. Oscar had something more wonderful than jewels and valuable possessions and appurtenances; Oscar had something that Tony's money couldn't buy.

Marcia lifted her arms to Oscar.

"Oh, yes-s-s-s, Oscar," she whispered, softly. "I will marry you. Oh, Oscar, yes-s-s-s!"

But Oscar did not take her in his arms as she had expected him to. He sat quite still,

looking into the dead embers of the dying fire.

"There's nothing between you and Thornton, is there?"

Marcia laughed.

"Not a thing, Oscar," she said lightly. "I mean that, too."

Still Oscar didn't move, didn't take her in his arms. He sat very glum, chewing diligently on his lower lip.



He could hear her gentle whisper: "Good old Oscar Dingleperfer... I'll always love Oscar Dingleperfer."

"I think I ought to tell you," he began, "that Thornton was expecting you here tonight. He went out on purpose to show you that he didn't give a whoop in hell about you. He told me that you were after him for his money and that he knew it. He said he was sick of dames chasing him for his dough. I can understand that."

Here Oscar hesitated and after a cogent pause, he went on, his voice broken a little. "He led me to believe that you . . . that you were his mistress. I . . . I hate being

in love with another man's mistress. It's . . . oh, damn it all, you know what I mean."

Now Marcia jumped up from the sofa. Her eyes were blazing and her lips were white with sudden rage.

"The hell he told you that!" she cried out, angrily. "I'm not any man's mistress, see! Why, that low down son of a . . ."

MARCIA DIDN'T FINISH because the door opened very slowly and a round fat little man who looked for all the world like Tony Thornton and who must surely be his elder brother stepped into the hall. He wore evening dress, a white carnation in his buttonhole; a derby and a silver handled cane were in his fingers. He took off his overcoat and threw it down,

unconscious of the destruction to the white flower in the lapel of it. Then he tripped over to the door of the drawing room and seeing Oscar and Marcia before the fireplace heaved a big sigh.

He said:

"Did she come, old boy?"

Oscar got up quickly from the sofa and with long sure strides crossed the room to the newcomer. Marcia saw that Oscar's fists were clenched so white at his sides that they seemed almost bloodless.

"Don't ask silly, obvious questions, Mark!" Oscar snarled. "And what was the big idea of telling me that she was your mistress? Why the hell did you rig me out in Oscar Dingleperfer's butler's uniform and beg me to get her out of your life if she wasn't ever really in it? I think you must be losing your mind!"

Marcia didn't understand anything. She didn't know who the man, Mark, was. What she saw and what she heard was running around in her mind like a dog chasing his tail. Oscar Dingleperfer's uniform. That meant that Oscar wasn't Oscar, that Oscar was someone else . . . the man who had asked her to marry him wasn't Oscar Dingleperfer, he was someone in Oscar Dingleperfer's butler's uniform. But why? Why? What was it all about. What were they talking about?

Mark was a little angry now, too. "Listen here, Jerome. I said she was my mistress and she was my mistress. I'm no liar. I guess a man knows when a girl's his mistress and when she isn't. That isn't the sort of a thing that leaves any doubt in a man's mind. A girl is a mistress or she isn't a mistress and she was my mistress! But before we go into this more thoroughly, how about introducing me to your date?" Mark beamed and waved a hand toward Marcia.

Marcia thought that Oscar was going to explode and splash all over the big room. He looked swollen and big and about to burst with anger. "Mark, you damned fool!" he cried out, viciously. "First you tell me that she is your mistress and now you want me to introduce you to her!"

Mark was exasperated now. "This girl isn't Clarice, Jerome . . . this girl . . ."

Marcia broke into the argument. She touched Jerome's arm lightly. "I never saw this man before, Oscar. . . . I mean Jerome. I was looking for Mr. Tony Thornton. I . . . why, I must be in the wrong house if Mr. Tony Thornton doesn't live here. You," she pointed to Mark. "You look like Tony. You do, indeed!"

"He ought to," Jerome said. "He's Tony's brother. Tony and Mark are my half-brothers, I'm Jerome Thornton. Haven't you ever heard of the three Thornton musketeers . . . Mark and Tony and Jerome?"

Marcia was still wondering how she had arrived at this house instead of Tony Thornton's residence. She stepped quickly across the room to the Louis XV desk and picked

up her evening purse. She fumbled in it for the paper on which she had jotted down Tony's address. How had she ever made such a mistake? She unfolded the slip of paper. There, in her tiny scrawl, was the address. Right side up it was No. 1116 and wrong side up it was 9111. She hadn't bothered to write the 16th Street on the paper because she had known that she would remember the street. So, she had gone to 1116 instead of 9111.

SHE WAS LAUGHING when she handed the paper to the two men. Jerome took it and his handsome young face broke into a smile. "I'll bet old Tony is out there now pacing up and down his floors wondering where his pretty date is!" Mark leaning over Jerome's shoulder read the slip, backed away and bent double with mirth. "If I'd known this was going to happen I wouldn't have left you here to do the honors, Jerome, my fran'!" he giggled. "So Clarice didn't come, eh. I had thought that . . ."

But Mark didn't finish what he had thought for suddenly there was a very shrill feminine "*Ah-h-h-h-h-h*" at the door.

They all turned and there in the doorway was a slender, dark young woman, her black eyes cutting flicks out of Mark Thornton's pinkish flesh. She talked quickly and angrily, this young woman. She held their attention so completely they almost failed to notice the snub nosed revolver in her steady fingers.

"Clarice . . ." Mark sputtered. "You thought what, Mark Thornton!" And when he started to speak she held up a silencing hand and spat out, venomously. "Don't tell me. I know! I followed you, Mark Thornton. I'm on to you, see? Asking me out here tonight and then blowing. Pretty cute of you, wasn't it. Trying to give me the run around to show me where I stood in your flabby, silly old affections! But I was ready for you. I was parked out front waiting for you to pull something phoney. I followed you on your nice drive this evening . . . to the Men's Club . . . through Rock Creek Park and around the Speedway! Finally back here! You thought I'd have left because I had wearied of waiting for you, didn't you? Well, get this, Mark Thornton. You'll go to Rockville, Maryland, right now and marry me or you'll find yourself so full of holes you can be used for any cook's kitchen strainer. This ain't no water pistol I have in my fingers! Come on, let's get goin'. I'm tired of chas-

ing you and the straightest line to any given point is the quickest. Get goin'!"

Mark got going! He went meekly, his shoulders drooped . . . a perfect martyr of a man who had loved well, once too often, and unwisely. Clarice followed dark and threatening behind him, giving him a jab once or twice with the nose of the revolver. At the door she threw a backward look over her shoulder at Marcia and Jerome. It was a glance that said, very eloquently: "How'm I doin', folks!"

Alone again, Jerome Thornton turned on his heel toward Marcia. He was very handsome and dark and slender. As he drew her quickly to his breast and rested his cheek on the gold softness of her hair, Marcia felt the blood flying out from her heart again, her legs growing weak beneath her.

"I can't get over it, darling," he said, gently. "You loved me for myself . . . as Oscar Dingleperfer . . . and not because I'm rich. All three of us Thorntons have been afraid of getting caught for our money. Mark, there, is the first to be taken in. Clarice was out for his dough and Mark knew it. That's why tonight . . ."

But he could not finish for Marcia's big blue eyes were holding his and her lips were

pursed. He bent down quickly and caught her lips within his own. His mouth stirred softly on them, drawing from her the sweet perfume of her love. His hands wandered, too, seeking charms he might have overlooked during that blissful period on the sofa.

Jerome put Marcia gently back from his embrace. "Say," he said, "what's your name, angel? I'll have to know to get the license in the morning."

Marcia blushed faintly and told him. They had been so much to each other this evening and Jerome not even knowing her name . . . well, that was awkward. But Marcia didn't say anything else. She was anxious to finish any talking, anxious to set her lips to work on something more thrilling than the mere utterance of words.

As Jerome's mouth found hers again he could hear the gentle, almost reverent, whisper. . . . "Good old Oscar Dingleperfer . . . I'll always love Oscar Dingleperfer."

And it might be said to Marcia Delmar's credit that in the hours that followed until the shiny nacre of dawn, when she became Mrs. Jerome Bonaparte Thornton, that she did not once think of the jewels and yachts and vast estates that would be hers forever more in the glorious, glamorous future.

If you got a kick out of this story, you'll certainly enjoy reading Phyllis Hoerner's next one for PEP. It's called "The Jade Engagement Ring" and it's different from anything she's ever written before. Look for it in the July issue of PEP STORIES.

NIGHT OWL!

By

GRACE HOLMES

(Conclusion)

TO imagine himself rescuing Kitty Connors from the real or fancied dangers she was fleeing, when he conducted her up the single flight of stairs leading from the top floor corridor to the roof of the apartment house, gave Dick Latham a keen thrill.

The excitement wasn't lessened by the fact that she permitted his arm to remain around her waist just as though they were still dancing, and the quivering softness of a luscious breast was delightfully sensed against his side.

Stepping on to the open roof, they breathed deeply. After such an atmosphere of stagnant smoke and overheated bodies at the party which was being forsaken so unceremoniously, they were grateful for the cool freshness of the breeze accompanying the dawn.

"Which way do we go?" asked Kitty, anxiously.

"To the right!" Dick replied, smiling.

Swiftly they scampered, vaulting cornices, rounding chimneys and a lot of skylights. How far they went, Kitty hadn't the faintest idea. . . . A backward glance showed that they were not being followed, and that was so great a relief to her that she seemed to care about nothing else at the moment.

She didn't even pause to consider why she was entrusting her safety to the eager willingness of a man whom she had known scarcely an hour, when she was in flight from the advances of another man with whom she had been well acquainted for many months!

Suddenly, Dick swerved for a door and down a stairway. . . . Scurrying along a carpeted hall, their soundless footsteps stopped in front of yet another door. . . . His key darted into the lock, and before she could catch her breath Kitty found herself in a room where he was switching on the lights.

"Here we are!" he exclaimed, laughing. "You're safe from the dragon or the bogeyman or whatever you're trying to escape."

She looked around, and then her glance wandered back to his face questioningly.

"This is my apartment!" he announced, chuckling, and offering her a cigarette from a teakwood box on a table beside a divan.

"Now, won't you sit down and tell me what all this exciting drama is about?" he added, smiling disarmingly.

Wearily, she dropped down on the divan. "Thanks! You've been very kind!" she murmured, blowing a gust of smoke toward the ceiling in a very eloquent gesture that might be construed as definitely triumphant, before she remarked:

"I was running away from Frank Alessandro."

His raised eyebrows expressed surprise. "I thought he was a special friend of yours," he said, quietly.

"You're not the only one who thought so, I guess!" she sneered. "But I'm not built that way."

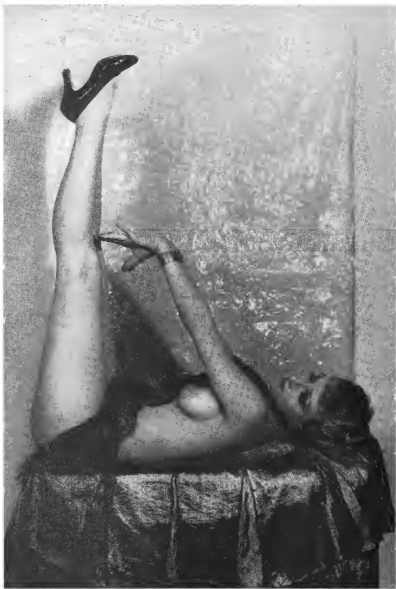
"What happened tonight?" he asked, taking a seat beside her, to wish that he could think of any plausible excuse for putting his arm about her once more, so that he could feel the softness of the warmth which he was inhaling.

She searched his eyes with her penetrating gaze, and the sneer on her lovely mouth became a smile of pleasantness.

"I don't know why I should be telling you my troubles, except that you helped me a while ago!" she observed.

"Tell me!" he pleaded. "I want to help you more."

Was that the proper moment to slip his arm about her? . . . Would she be inclined to snuggle against him, or would she be so resentful that all of the progress he had already made would be lost? . . . He decided to be very cautious. . . . The jutting breasts limned by her dress were temptations to make any man's fingers itch with desire to touch and fondle and crown the caress with a kiss, but he hesitated, wisely if regretfully.



"Do you know Frank Alessandro very well?" she queried, now purposely avoiding his eyes.

"Oh, I've seen him at parties and met him around New York!" replied Dick, carelessly. "You know, of course, that he seems to be just as much of a night owl as I am."

Kitty smiled broadly. "It might surprise you to know that Frank is my boss."

Dick looked puzzled.

"Frank owns the cloak room concession at the Parkside Casino, among a lot of other places, and I'm the cloak room girl at Parkside." She gave the explanation as she leaned sideways to snuff out her cigarette, and the surging motion of her bosom filled him with admiration.

He grinned. "Now I know where I've seen you before!" he cried, most interestedly. "But don't let me interrupt you . . . go on!"

"Frank has been trying to get fresh with me for some time." She was staring out of the window, where the dawn was paling into the brightness of day.

"He went too far tonight, and I slapped him," she continued, with an angry toss of her head. "That's why I asked you to get me away from the party so quickly."

"You're okay now!" he declared, consolingly.

"But I've lost my job, I suppose!" she said, nervously swinging a lovely leg over the side of the divan.

"There are other jobs!" he assured her.

"I hope so!" she laughed, mirthlessly. "My landlady certainly likes to get her room rent."

He hazarded a pat on her smooth shoulder, and even such a very slight physical contact made his pulse-beat race emotionally.

"Don't worry about a thing!" he said, optimistically. "Right now, I think some scrambled eggs and toast and coffee wouldn't be a very bad idea."

"I should be going home!" she murmured, hesitantly.

"I'll drive you home after breakfast!" he promised. "Come and help me fix the eggs."

He wanted to keep her with him as long as possible. . . . She really did not want to go home.

"Where's the kitchen?" she asked, smiling prettily.

BACK IN THE BEDROOM of the apartment where Kitty's stinging hand had rebuked

Frank so forcefully, he was still lying prone on the bed where he had fallen when he lost his balance. . . . And Jane Anderson was still reclining beneath the pile of coats and wraps where she was taking an alcoholic nap at the moment of his very belligerent encounter with Kitty.

Outside, the sounds of revelry were dying down, and, with the coming of daybreak, the party was almost over.

Frank stirred languidly and attempted to withdraw the arm which circled her tightly.

"What's the matter?" murmured Jane, sleepily, her lips melting from his mouth.

"Let's get out of here, kid!" he muttered, thickly.

Her flaming hair was strewn over his shoulder, her lips were swollen from the fiery ardor of the kisses she had exchanged with him, and in her eyes lurked the glowing spirit of a passionate nature that never seemed to be satisfied.

"It's nice here, with you!" she whispered, kissing him again. "Let's stay a while."

"You're cute but you're crazy!" he said, rather irritably. "This is the finish of the party, girlie, so come on, let's go home."

He stood up, steadied his wobbly gait, and headed for the door. "I'll wait for you outside," he told her.

Jane slowly wriggled from under a coat, stood erect and walked to the mirror. Her dizziness had vanished. She had enjoyed a nice snooze before Frank had entered the bedroom to force an interlude of amorous dalliance with Kitty, and after he had staggered back to Jane, the minutes ensuing had been food for dreams.

"Kitty Connors doesn't know what she is missing!" sighed Jane, as she wielded a scarlet lipstick on the pulsing bow of her mouth. "Gee! Can that guy make love!"

Clearly, she remembered what he had said about an apartment, and her eyes gleamed with feverish anticipation.

"He said he would furnish it to suit me!" she murmured, searching for the cup of a brassiere that had been displaced by fondling fingers. "I can hardly wait to see it."

She fluffed her red curls, turned away from the mirror, and got her own coat from the pile on the bed. . . . She had worn nothing like a hat to the party. . . . And she paid no attention to anything or anybody when she was crossing the living room to join Frank in the foyer. . . . Out they went, down the elevator, to the pretentious limou-



sine that was parked at the curb, waiting for its owner.

Jane jumped into the seat which had been occupied by Kitty just a short time before. Frank climbed into the driver's seat beside her, and started the car. Dizzy though he was from too many highballs, he guided the automobile around the corner, turned, and headed it westward.

Moodily, he drove without saying a word.

"Frank!" she whispered, snuggling against him and laying her head on his shoulder. "Aren't you happy?"

He was silent. The car shot into Central Park, and settled into a lope for the journey over to Broadway.

"You're thinking of Kitty Connors!" she said, smiling shrewdly.

"What of it?" he snapped. "She'll never report for duty over at the Parkside Casino after what happened tonight, and I'll have to be hiring a new girl."

"That's a problem, isn't it?" Jane laughed merrily. "Hiring a new girl! . . . You can get a hundred girls for that cloak room job in an hour's notice."

Frank said nothing. He guided the car onward.

"You're thinking of Kitty, not about her job in the cloak room!" said Jane. "Confess, now, isn't that true?"

Her fingers were wandering about him thrillingly. . . . The car started to slow down.

"If necessary, darling, I can take that job in the cloak room until you find another satisfactory girl," she suggested.

She ventured the proposal only with the idea of insinuating herself further into his good graces. She hadn't the faintest idea of continuing in that cloak room job permanently!

Jane visualized herself in that apartment he had mentioned, clad in expensive negligees and lingerie in a perfumed atmosphere, with a maid to serve her breakfasts in bed, and all of the incidentals that go with money and leisure.

Her slim form, pressing against him, seemed to be a curving wand of softness. . . . Her fingers were sophisticatedly active, and her lips were on their way toward his mouth when he put on the brakes and halted the car in the shadow of a culvert, where the spreading light of dawn had not yet penetrated.

"I can be everything to you!" she breathed. "Everything!"

A speeding taxicab rattled over the roof of the culvert. . . . A breeze swished through it. . . . But nothing was of the slightest interest to Frank at that moment except the stinging cling of Jane's lips and the pressure of her seething body against him.

IN DICK LATHAM's apartment, Kitty laid down her coffee cup.

"Splendid!" she said, smiling, then before she saw the pleased smile of Dick Latham, she added:

"I ought to go home, but even if you drive me, I'm afraid of Frank Alessandro!" she murmured.

"Why?" asked Dick, frowning.

"He won't forget that slap so easily!" she declared.

"You mean he might be vengeful?" asked Dick, munching his last mouthful of scrambled eggs and toast.

"Frank likes to get what he wants!" she chuckled. "And somebody is likely to suffer, otherwise."

Dick's eyes hardened. "You won't suffer, anyway!" he said. "Why don't you stay here this morning? I'll take you home this afternoon, and I know certain people who will be only too glad to make Frank Alessandro draw in his horns and behave himself, so far as you are concerned."

Kitty stared into his eyes, and the infatuation she found there was tempered with a certain restraint that increased her confidence in him, but she laughed doubtfully.

"Stay here . . . with you . . . alone?" she asked.

"Why not?" he retorted. "You can relax right there on the divan, and after you've rested we can eat lunch and then I'll take you home, if you think that Frank has cooled his disappointment."

Kitty's eyelids drooped. "I am tired!" she said. "I could sleep a little while, and perhaps then . . ."

She cuddled down on the yielding surface of the divan, and put a soft cushion under her dark curls. Her eyes closed. Dick stood looking down at her, striving to control his desires.

Abruptly, he turned away, picked up the breakfast tray from which they had eaten, carried it into the pantry and returned to the divan within the space of a few minutes. He lighted a cigarette, inhaled deeply, and watched the steady rhythm of her breathing



which told him that she hadn't lost any time in dropping off to sleep.

The delightfully shapely contours of her figure were now outlined by her dress more revealingly than ever, as she lay on the divan, and with each intake of breath her voluptuous breasts swelled outward, and ridges of soft white flesh had started to show above her neckline.

"What a pretty picture!" he said, fervently.

Ridding himself of a sigh that came from the heart, he resolutely withstood temptation by turning his back upon her and walking into his bedroom, where he took off his coat and vest, put on a dressing gown and flung himself upon his bed.

Kitty would probably sleep for several hours, he decided, and it was wise for him to do the same. As a matter of fact, slumber would help to keep his mind from dwelling upon her magnetic charms, and thus prevent an attempted caress which might blast a friendship that had started to bud only a few hours ago!

But sleep wouldn't come. In his mind's eye he could see the vividly beautiful figure of her lying on the divan, and the more he thought of it the wider awake he became.

It was as though the magnetism of her loveliness was drawing him to the living room to feast his eyes and steep his senses in her lure, even if he was compelled to use every ounce of his will power to resist the physical urge within him.

He jumped off the bed, and in a few long strides he was standing by the divan again. Slowly, he sank to a seat. The skirt of her dress had ridden past her knees, her warm thighs peeped from above her stockings, and the strain of her reclining position had spread the neckline so far that the magnificent hills of her breasts were half bare. . . . Her dewy lips were parted, to convert her mouth into the heart of a crimson rose, and the column of her throat pulsed vitally.

Would she awaken if he bestowed a gentle

kiss upon that fragrantly open mouth, just a fleeting taste of the pleasures he anticipated when their friendship ripened?

He bent over her. . . . The tender skin of her mouth was like the petals of a flower, and he found it surprisingly easy for his lips to penetrate deep enough to taste the honeydew which seemed to be waiting there for the sip of an amorous bee. . . . But, suddenly, he felt the responsive cling of her lips, soft arms were winding about him, and the throbbing warmth in her body enveloped him. Her eyes were tightly shut, but apparently all of her senses were acutely alive!

To Dick, it was the opening of the floodgates of love. . . . To Kitty, it was the embodiment of a heavenly dream!

PREPARING FOR THE incoming rush of dinner patrons, Pete, who always did the chores in advance of Kitty's arrival, was in the cloak room of the Parkside Casino late that afternoon. His face wore a somber expression, and he went about his work disinterestedly.

He was checking the coat racks when he heard a peremptory voice:

"Has Kitty come in yet?" Frank Alessandro loomed beside him.

"No!" replied Pete, quickly. "But she telephoned a few minutes ago to tell you she was quitting because she was married."

Frank's eyes showed that the news startled him. . . . She wasn't married at dawn that morning!

"Did she say whom she married?" he asked, quickly.

"She said to tell you that she and Mr. Dick Latham were going to be night owls together for the rest of their lives," said Pete, "and she told me that you would understand."

The door banged shut behind Frank.

"I guess he did understand, all right!" said Pete, scratching his head with a mystified expression on his boyish countenance.





Hiking To Happiness

By

KAY CARROLL

SURROUNDED by a heterogeneous assortment of flamboyantly illustrated booklets and circulars, Bessy Ford lay outside the bed covers, heedless of the fact that a night dress holds no secrets from an observer when one is reclining in certain positions.

With an impatient exclamation, she tossed the last folder which she was perusing. It hit the ceiling, bounced back and caromed from the left shoulder of Alice Clark, who was standing before the mirror and brushing the shiny waves of her dark hair.

Alice smiled. "Well, did you find a wonderful place for us to spend our vacation this year?" she asked.

"They're all wonderful, darling, if you believe their ads!" retorted Bessy. "But we know from experience that they are all about the same, if you get what I mean."

"But we've got to spend our holiday somewhere!" Alice rejoined, the reflection of light from a lamp near the mirror giving a pleasing hint of slim charms, impertinently pointed breasts and a curving back to which her silk pajamas were clinging caressingly.

"Certainly!" murmured Bessy. "And I've got an idea."

"Really!" Alice laughed. "What is it?"

"Let's go hitch-hiking!" suggested Bessy, boldly.

Alice looked at her with an air of superiority, but in any event her roommate was worth scanning. . . . Bessy's yellow curls were in the disarray of youthful nonchalance at bed time, her knees were crossed, her toes were wiggling ceiling-ward, the night dress had slid upward and downward until it was only a pile of chiffon around her waist. . . . Luscious thighs and hips in the enchantment of nudity, with the glorious fullness of generously buxom breasts, were there for all the world to see and to admire. . . . But, after all, it was only Alice who saw those beauties now!

"Pass me up on that idea!" she said, tolerantly.

"Why?" retorted Bessy. "It's a lot of fun."

"You mean it's a lot of grief!" Alice countered. "And there's much more hiking than hitching, from all I've heard."

"It would be different!" argued Bessy, sulkily pouting her red lips. "I would like to try it!"

Alice vigorously brushed the tendrils on her neck, inspected the job with the side reflection of a hand mirror, and, apparently satisfied, she put down her brush, before replying:

"Go ahead, kid!" she smiled. "But this is one vacation that we won't spend together."

"Aw, be a sport!" said Bessy, pleadingly. "It won't hurt you to try something new."

Alice laughed. "I don't like low heeled shoes, and you can't hike in high heels."

"Oh, you're trying to be sarcastic!" Bessy thumped her pillow, and, with a deft movement of her body, she pulled down her night dress and gave its shoulder straps an upward twist to the spot where they belonged.

"I'm telling you the truth!" insisted Alice.

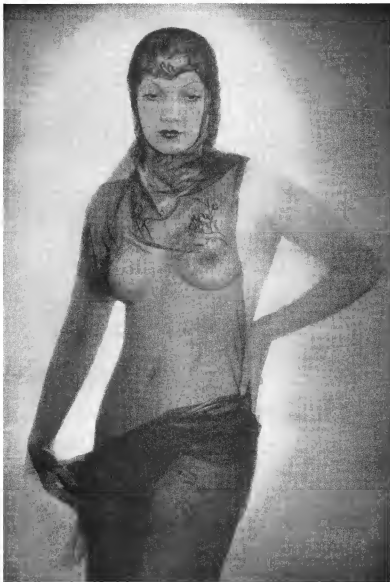
Bessy squirmed under the covers, silently.

"You'll change your mind!" chuckled Alice, snapping off the light and stretching herself on the other side of the bed.

JUST THREE WEEKS LATER, the afternoon sunshine sifting through the overhanging boughs of an elm tree danced in the yellow curls of a girl who was lying prone on the wild grass. Beside her was a small traveling case, large enough to hold the necessities and small enough to be carried very easily by a hitch-hiker.

Bessy hadn't changed her mind. This was the third day of her self-selected "tramping" vacation. Alice had been adamant in her refusal to go along.

So far, it had been undiluted fun for Bessy. At least half of the distance she had traveled so far had been accomplished by offered rides in passing automobiles. There had been a few unpleasant experiences, but it wasn't diffi-



cult, with the aid of a business end of a lengthy pin, to persuade ardent automobilists that even though they were "on the make", she wasn't.

Walking, riding, eating and sleeping where and when she willed, the vacation was proving to be the most thrilling of Bessy's young life, and she was by no means so youthful that sophistication wasn't a valuable part of her armor.

The shoes, stockings and knickers that might be seen on the golfing links of any club clothed her nether extremities very attractively, and a khaki shirt, wide open at the neck and unbuttoned so deeply that it gave the sun a chance to caress the valley between the hills of her breasts, gave her a chic appearance.

She thought she would enjoy the late afternoon under that elm tree and wait until nightfall before walking a couple of hundred yards back to the roadside camp which she had spied. It was a nice looking place, and it was there that she had determined to spend the night.

But the promptings of a healthy appetite, plus the fact that she had consumed only a light luncheon, moved her to wander toward the camp site quite a while before sundown, and she was so early for supper that there was no one in the restaurant when she pushed open the screen door, deposited her bag and glided on to a stool before the counter.

"Good evening!" grinned a young man, who appeared from a swinging door, and placed a penciled menu before her.

"Hello!" murmured Bessy, flashing him a glance from azure eyes that were calculated to be disturbing to any man.

"Your car outside?" he queried, pleasantly.

"I have no car!" She shook her head.

"Hitch-hiker?" he pursued, running a polishing cloth over the space on the counter before which she sat.

"This time you guessed correctly!" she smiled. "How are your broiled hamburger steaks?"

"Never hetter!" he said. "Rare, medium, well done?"

"Rare!" she said, emphatically. "Smother it with onions, and give me a dish of fried potatoes and a lettuce salad on the side, with a large cup of coffee."

"Right!" he replied. "Have a seat over there in that arm chair and read the newspaper while you're waiting. I won't be long."

Bessy slid off the stool. "I'm hungry!" she warned him.

He gave her a lingering look as she walked across the floor, with her hips swaying in knickers and the suggestion of voluptuous breasts aquiver under her khaki blouse . . . And she was thinking that he was quite the most attractive chap she had encountered in or out of the city.

She hadn't seen anybody else around the camp, but she had noticed the name "*Blubell Camp*", when she had first seen it, and under it was a further name: "*Joe Brown, Proprietor*" . . . He seemed too young to own the place!

She glanced at the headlines in the newspaper, but she had scarcely finished when the swinging doors opened and the aroma of meat and potatoes assailed her nostrils, plus hot coffee.

Rapidly, she walked back to her stool at the counter, and without a moment's hesitation she sliced off a piece of hamburger steak and popped it into her red mouth.

"Hmmm!" she said, appreciatively. "Delicious! You've got a good cook back there in the kitchen."

"Thanks!" he laughed. "I'm the cook."

A savory forkful of onions and potatoes paused on its way to her lips. "Congratulations!" she said.

"Yeah!" He leaned his elbows on the counter near her. "I'm not only the cook, but I'm the boss, the owner, the mechanic, the janitor and all the other titles you can think of."

"You're Joe Brown?" she queried.

"Correct!" he answered.

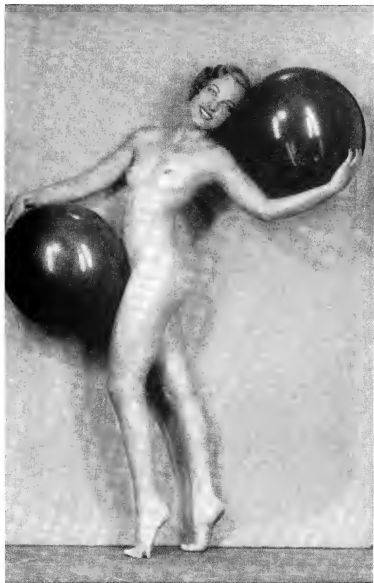
She ate with the gusto of a hearty appetite, and he watched her with soulful appreciation of her attractiveness . . . The khaki blouse hadn't been buttoned any higher since she came into the restaurant, and while she paid strict attention to the rapidly disappearing food on her plate, he had an opportunity to squint into the valley of her bosom and get a glimpse of the gorgeous breasts arising to right and left.

"Taking a chance, aren't you?" he asked, seriously.

"What do you mean?" she rejoined, enjoying her lettuce salad.

"A pretty girl like you going hitch-hiking!" he explained. "There are lots of fellows on the road with no good intentions."

"So I've found out!" she laughed, swallowing a mouthful of coffee.



"Aren't you afraid?" he continued, wonderingly.

"See that?" From a secret parking place on her khaki blouse she drew a long pin. "It's wonderful what that can do to cool off a fellow who is too ambitious."

Joe roared with laughter. "So it's not very dangerous for a girl like you to be roaming around the country alone?"

"Not if she knows how to take care of herself!" Bessy rejoined, and then she added:

"I want to sleep at your camp tonight. You've got a spare cabin, I guess?"

"You bet!" he said, heartily.

"And a shower bath?" she went on, looking at him over the rim of her coffee cup. "I can use a shower, even a length of hose attached to a good faucet."

"We've all the comforts of home without the inconveniences!" He was smiling, but staring at her with a look in his eyes that bordered on sheer adoration.

TWILIGHT CAME AND DEEPENED into darkness. A billion stars glimmered in a clear sky. A cool breeze swept the countryside, and Bessy sat on a camp chair in front of her cabin, clad in pongee pajamas which helped to beautify her voluptuous contours.

She had been grateful for the shower, which was simply a booth with a curtain in front, and when she scooted back to her cabin a powderpuff had dusted its fragrance over her body from neck to toe.

She had heard many automobiles drive up to the camp, the rattle of supper dishes, the harsh clamor of voices. . . . Now there was a semblance of peace in the atmosphere.

She wondered where Joe Brown was? . . . The camp was sleeping. . . . There wasn't a light in a single cabin, not even in hers, and the restaurant was deserted.

She thought of Alice, who had chosen to spend her vacation at a hotel at the seashore. . . . Alice would be dancing now, she suspected, with a young man who was a casual acquaintance and who expected to take her for a stroll and a petting party on the beach a little later!

Bessy giggled. "I hope she has a good time!" she thought.

Leaning back in her chair, she scanned the sky. . . . It was a marvelous night, and occasionally there was a falling star, shooting like a comet across the heavens.

"I thought all hitch hikers were tired

enough to go to bed early!" remarked a familiar voice.

She jumped, nervously. Joe Brown was smiling down at her.

"Isn't the cabin comfortable?" he asked, solicitously.

"Splendid!" she replied. "But on a night like this I'm too romantic to go to bed early."

He stretched himself on the grass beside her. "Do you mind if I stay and admire the beauty of the night with you?"

"I was just wondering where you were!" she whispered.

He felt his pulse pounding against his wrist. . . . He had never seen a girl anywhere who filled him with such an insane desire to crush her in his arms and drain all the sweetness from her red mouth. He could see the protuberant swelling of her bosom beneath her pajamas, the artistically sloping lines of shoulders and arms, back and waist and hips.

"How far are you hiking?" he asked, carelessly, in order to keep up the conversation.

"As far as my feet and automobiles and two weeks' vacation will carry me!" she replied.

"Then . . . what?" he asked, softly.

"A desk, a typewriter, stenography, nine-to-five o'clock until next summer!" she smiled.

His face was very close to a bare ankle, visible below the edge of her pajama trousers. The pale skin invited a kiss. So did the sculptured calf of the leg which joined it. Upward his glance traveled, to thighs and hips and waist and the glory of her breasts. He could smell the odor of scented powder borne to his nostrils on the night wind.

Joe found it difficult to stifle a groan. . . . His vivid imagination was conveying to his senses the thrill that might be his if she were in his arms, her soft body pressed tightly to him, her breasts cupped in his palms, her mouth giving him all of the sweetness he thought it contained.

There had been other guests at *Bluebell Camp* who had sat beside him on the grass, while parents slept or while husbands snored. Other bodies had been pressed to his, and his fingers had caressed curves ranging from adolescent buds to over-voluptuousness. . . . Many cool lips had flamed into blistering pools of passion. . . . But he had never thought that anyone as lovely as Bessy would ever visit his camp!

"Do you want to go back to the city?" he asked, hesitantly.

"Certainly not!" she retorted, sighing deeply. "Who would exchange all this for a typewriter and a desk?"

She waved a hand at the sky. "But I'm talking very silly now!" she laughed. "I ought to be thankful I've got a job."

She gazed down at him. "I was lying half the afternoon under an elm tree down the road. . . . I think it's much nicer than sitting on a camp chair in respectable formality. . . . Do you mind if I do?"

With startling suddenness, he realized that she was by his side, and her yellow hair illuminated the darkness of the greensward.

"You weren't taking a silly view of things!" he told her. "There's nothing quite as beautiful as the country, except the loveliness of a very beautiful woman."

She hesitated to make a glib reply. . . . He seemed to be so sincere in his conversation. . . . Did he think she was really so beautiful? . . . Was he so very much attracted to her, as attracted as she was to him? . . . She couldn't glance toward him without being seized with a desire to circle his neck with her arms, draw him into her embrace, and capture his mouth while her eyes gazed upward into the canopy of stars overhead.

"You don't have to go back to New York and an office and a desk!" he ventured.

"You're encouraging tonight!" she laughed.

"I used to work in an office!" he continued. "Now I've got a summer place here, and in the winter I'm in Florida, where I've got a camp like this."

"I envy you!" she whispered.

"You don't have to envy me!" he rejoined, propping himself on his elbow and gazing down into her eyes.

Bessy's heart fluttered crazily. . . . There had been many boy friends in her life from the days of school until the present time. . . .

Some were just platonic acquaintances, others had been childish petting party partners, and there were a few whose flaming interludes brought vivid flushes to her cheeks whenever she recalled certain indiscretions! But the attractive qualities of Joe Brown transcended all others.

Possibly it was because her yearning eyes summoned him, but without any other warning she felt his lips on her mouth, and the galaxy of stars winked happily overhead. . . . Where in this world or any other world was there a kiss like this?

Bessy felt herself being strained in his embrace. . . . She thrilled to the fingers which were discovering the wondrous softness of her breasts, and wandering, creeping, lingering, in their progress up and down the silk pongee pajama. . . . She moaned blissfully!

Joe thought that the stars in the sky weren't to be compared with the stars in her eyes! And the ecstasy of heaven was naught in comparison with the deliciousness of her lips!

ALICE'S FOREHEAD was creased in a frown as she read the telegram a hotel bellboy had handed her:

"Darling: Would it surprise you to know that I hiked straight into the arms of the most wonderful husband in the world? Give the office my regards and my swift resignation. Some day I'll introduce you to Joe. Is he marvelous? You've no idea!"

Alice's frown dissolved with her smile. She slipped the telegram in to the groove between her breasts, easily accessible even though she was sitting on the verandah of a hotel.

"Hiking to happiness!" she whispered, dreamily.





Behind The Office Door

By

ATWATER CULPEPPER

OH—by the way, Miss Ashworth—” Lloyd Sheffield swung around in his desk chair and surveyed his secretary, whose notebook lay open on her knee—a knee that was crossed intriguingly under her trim blue skirt—“you haven’t made out that check yet for Mrs. Sheffield? Well, suppose you change the amount to seven hundred and fifty. Leave it when you bring in that batch of letters. I’ll sign it along with them.”

Annette Ashworth had never managed to get altogether used to the way he would lean back in his desk chair and look her over in apparent appraisal, from her modish oxfords to the crown of her tawny hair. She couldn’t say she altogether disliked it. There was a certain intriguing thrill to it—like being on a darkened stage in the full glare of the spotlight. Those boring, quizzical gray eyes seemed to look right into her innermost soul. You felt—sort of undressed.

“Yes, it’s a little larger than usual,” he was saying. “I’ll give it to her myself. Don’t altogether like her—any woman—coming down to the office. Especially Diana—she has a sort of way with her—that puts the office on edge.”

He paused, as if expecting a reply. As none was forthcoming, he added,

“That’s all for this afternoon. Oh—by the way—”

He leaned forward and dropped a hand over the slender fingers that still held the pencil. “I’ve decided I need a vacation. The business can stand it for a month or so. I’ve taken a stateroom on the *Campania* for next Saturday.”

She let her fingers lie in his. “That ought to be—splendid, Mr. Sheffield. I think you do deserve a rest. You’ve worked hard this last six months—”

“Why didn’t you say ‘swell’? Only you couldn’t. What I wanted to say was—” he hesitated for an instant, and she could feel his fingers tighten. “Would you consider sharing it with me? Lac Leman, Monte Carlo, the Riviera? They tell me they’re

about as near paradise in the springtime as you’ll find on earth. And with you along—”

Every drop of color faded out of Annette Ashworth’s face. His strong fingers were pulling her imperceptibly nearer. The scarlet flooded back into her cheeks. She couldn’t manage to free her hand.

“Was that meant for a wise crack? It didn’t seem quite your style. Especially out of a clear sky, like that.”

He coughed nervously. “Did you take it that way? No, I didn’t mean it for a—wise crack.”

Her cheeks were flaming patches of red. “I suppose—after two years here—I might have expected something like that. Only it didn’t seem quite like you. And isn’t it usual to lead up to anything of that nature—a little more subtly? Not so much of a business proposition? Shouldn’t you have pulled me over on your knee—kissed me till I got all mused and bothered—pawed at my waist?”

She was standing over him, her hand still clasped in his. His eyes had a daring, inscrutable glint in them that she had never quite seen before. “Want—me—to—?” he drawled dangerously.

“You—you wouldn’t dare—” she gasped. She did not recognize her own voice.

She was unprepared for the sudden tug at her wrist. She found herself caught off balance, swung down upon his knee. Even then she didn’t struggle. One arm clasped her waist tightly. The other had suddenly, efficiently, sought the bar pin at her throat, made brief work of the buttons of her blouse, flung it back from her shoulders. His tapering fingers rested on one firm, nubile little breast, confined only by the narrowest and laciest of brassieres. She was white hot with anger at the involuntary way it tautened under his clasp.

“You suggested it, you know,” he drawled mischievously. His head bent toward her—his lips, firm, full, masterful, were upon hers. Furiously angry as she was, she could not bear to wrench away her lips. She realized



that the quivering hemisphere was surging out of the silken band over it, firm as a tiny melon under his hand. The hot breath surged in her nostrils, her heart thudded.

Simultaneously they drew apart. She caught up her notebook and stood defiantly out of reach. He made no effort to follow. She turned her back, repaired her disarranged garments with fingers that shook, banged the covers of her notebook, and strode out of the inner office, fire and ice, toward her own desk.

Lloyd Sheffield sat at his desk, staring at the half open door. His lips puckered in a tuneless whistle. Well, that was crude, he knew. Flashed it on her too abruptly. Pity, too. His thoughts ran riot about the girl who had been sitting opposite him, the lithe, clean cut, firm breasted young woman whose quiet efficiency was the making of his office.

His eyes fell on a tiny spot of white on the floor—a little square of linen with a blue monogram. He picked it up and held it to his lips. With a shamefaced look about the room, he slipped it into his pocket.

In the outer office Annette Ashworth sat at her typewriter. The swirls in her notebook swam before her. She stared at them with dry eyes, with lips tightly pressed together. At last she got up, crossed to the telephone, and hesitated a moment with her hand on the receiver. There was no sound from her employer's room. In a low voice she called a number.

"The Mammoth? Could I speak with Mr. Bennett? Department 14?"

There was a moment's delay. Then a vibrant, eager voice over the wire.

"Listen, Dick. I know I shouldn't call you up at the office. I don't, very often. But I just wanted to tell you that—it's a date for tonight, if you still want to take me out. Okeh?"

"Is it, bright eyes? I'll say it is. Of course I can't spend money on you like that—that plutocrat employer of yours—but I'll try to show you a working man's idea of a good time. Put on your pretties—I'll be there with all the jingles."

Thoroughly, efficiently, she transcribed the long list of letters Sheffield had dictated. With forced steadiness she made out the check for seven hundred and fifty dollars to Mrs. Diana Sheffield.

Her mouth set in grim lines. Mrs. Sheffield she knew as a dark, thin faced, mercurial little woman with a brusque manner, a tongue which Annette suspected could be vitriolic

on occasion, something about her that made the office tense and edgy on her infrequent visits—visits that usually resulted in Sheffield's drawing a substantial check. Small wonder he wanted to leave her behind on his vacation—and take his secretary along. She finished entering the stub, tore out the check, and took the pile of neatly arranged correspondence into her employer's private office.

He looked up sharply. She felt that her brassiere was still disarranged, that under her blouse a pointed hemisphere made a taut bas-relief under the fabric. She tried not to shrug her shoulders.

"I think you'll find everything in order, Mr. Sheffield. And I've made out another check—to myself—up to Saturday. If you'll just sign that, please—"

"Why, certainly, Miss Ashworth. Only—I had intended making some other arrangement—"

"Such as an apartment—and what goes with it? Thanks, no. I think that covers all that's due me. And when you come back—you won't have any trouble, of course, in getting another secretary. I'm through."

"Why—Miss Ashworth—Annette!" He had risen in astonishment. She already had her hat and coat on. She walked swiftly out the office door and toward the elevator.

So that was that. She was through. Out of a job. And through no fault of her own. She wanted to cry. Instead she bit her red lip, lest the elevator boy see her agitation. Tears could wait—till she got home.

For two years now she had been the efficient, satisfactory and incidentally well paid secretary of Lloyd Sheffield. Two years of cool efficiency, of punctilious performance of her duties. She had admired her employer, his own cool efficiency in everything he undertook, from pleading a case in court to the faultless set of his coat, the perfect polish on his shoes, the correct appearance of his golfing kit.

The few times that he had lapsed from his impersonal relations with her she had regarded as those vagaries that every professional man allowed himself—starved for a little affection at home, she had told herself indulgently. A kiss or two, a casual embrace, a significant pawing—she had always thought herself able to take care of the situation. The unasked for raises in salary, the crisp bills she had found in her pay envelope at Christmas, she had thought rewards of her own



painstaking devotion to the office interests. And now, out of a clear sky—this!

She unhooked her little blue skirt, and let it slide down about her ankles. With unsteady fingers she discarded the blouse. The disarranged brassiere still felt uncomfortable—she flung it off, and stared at the firm, round, uncovered breast, still reddened from those questing fingers that afternoon—the first it had ever been handled in that fashion by masculine fingers. She could still feel it tingle—the sensation had been a little terrifying—yet—not unpleasant. She smoothed the firm flesh with her own fingers. She filled the tub, and lay luxuriously soaking in the warm water, laying away even the memories of that hectic afternoon—could she quite wash them away?

She was a bit disappointed that evening. Dick Bennett had called for her with a taxi, an unusual extravagance. She tried to be wonderfully gracious to him, even though she couldn't help contrasting unfavorably the cheap dine-and-dance place with its worn napery and dull silver with the swanky restaurants where on a few not-to-be-forgotten occasions her employer had taken her to lunch.

At any rate she congratulated herself that it was honest. They danced, in a murky cloud of cheap cigarette smoke. She wasn't offended when Dick held her so tightly that she could hardly get her breath—crushed to his chest, bending her back so that every muscle was pressed against his. She tried to tell herself that she liked—dancing that way.

His lips brushed her cheek—she knew that he had been drinking more than he should. Dick was perspiring unpleasantly—tiny drops were standing out on his temples—his collar was getting limp and bulgy around the folds. She wanted to tell him that she wished he would use a less odorous shaving lotion—she half closed her eyes and danced on, on—

She was on the point of telling him, as they rode home in a jolting taxi, with his arm around her, what her employer had proposed that afternoon. But after all, why spoil things? There were some things better kept secret—memories to which the perfume would cling, though time dried up their velvety texture.

Dick paid off the taxi driver and dismissed him. Well, she would let him come up to her apartment—for just a few moments, she told him. She really shouldn't do it. They sat

on the davenport, Dick's arm tightly about her. One hand was pressed against the smooth roundness of her breast, the other was stroking her thigh, idly snapping the elastic of her garter.

She was tired—sleepy, clubbed into a sodden numbness, aware that she was saying yes and no unheeding. Another arm about her—a stolen, wild, delicious moment—

Suddenly she tautened. She became sharply aware that Dick's fingers had been playing with the fastenings of her gown, through her unheeding reverie—had unfastened it all the way down. She struggled half heartedly.

"No—no—you mustn't do that!" She came back out of a foggy void to protest. He had slipped her gown off her shoulders, his hot fingers were smoothing possessively the soft flesh beneath.

"Why not, baby?" He had managed to get it off her arms, he clutched avidly at the satiny flesh. "We're all alone—nobody to bother us—nice here. Listen, kid." He hiccupped a couple of times, cleared his throat. "Got a proposition. How about us two—just us—stepping off to some p-place over th' week end? Somewhere like Atlantic City, say? Gee, what a time we could have, sweetness! Sound good to you?"

"Dick—Dick Bennett!" She sat up rigidly, shoving unsuccessfully against his shoulder.

"Sure, why not? I—c'n afford that. Who knows—who cares? 'S bein' done everywhere—rich an' poor. Can't 'ford to marry you n'r anybody else jus' now. That's out, of course. But we could have a li'l fun on the side, anyway."

She was too stunned to reply, even to struggle. Taking her silence for acquiescence, his arm was tightening about her. His free hand was burrowing down under the half-removed gown, about the satiny flesh of her waist, sliding along soft roundness. With a maudlin chuckle he found the silken yoke about her hips, fumbled with the tiny buttons—

Her world was crashing about her ears. Everybody did it—rich, poor. Her standards, that she had so rigorously maintained, weren't getting her anywhere.

"Do you know—what it means—if I said—yes? What it means—to both of us?" Her voice was not her own—a faint whisper, from very far away.

"Sure I know what it means! Means—

(Please turn to page 59)



Wasted Time

By
ALINE
DELLA
BODINE



THE gleaming pane of the Pullman window sent back a reflection of the section across the aisle and its delectable occupant. Alan could see slender legs stretched to a resting place on the opposite seat from an adorable rounded body; the tempting fullness of firm breasts under a scarlet sweater; and a soft throat that curved to a dimpled chin. Suddenly he was looking into a laughing vivacious face.

"Come on over." Her voice was husky glamour. "Come along; I don't bite," as he still hesitated.

Why not? They were stranded, by a slide, on top of the Cascades and they were the only ones left in their coach. Alan took his long good looking self over and sat down.

"I know it sounds like a traveling salesman's alibi, but your face does seem familiar. I've wondered about you for the last three days." He looked at her searchingly.

"I didn't know that you had even seen me the last three days, you've managed to keep your admiration so perfectly concealed. I began to think I had buck teeth and crossed eyes." She smiled to show teeth that decidedly were not buck.

"You should have both; you're too dangerous in your present condition." He took in the danger with grudging admiration. "And I don't want anything to do with that kind of danger. I've a beast of a hang-over from last time." His mouth tightened as he remembered the last time. He had been dropped with a bang by The Girl when she found



"Order enough for two," a husky glamorous familiar voice said.



He turned suddenly from the phone to see Sue in the doorway of the next suite.

out he had quarreled with The Old Man and his millions.

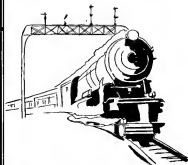
"But they say the best thing for a hang-over is another drink," she grinned at him.

Damn it! He had seen her somewhere before. "What did you say your name was?"

"I didn't say, but perhaps we should start with names. It's Sue Nelson. Now yours." He handed her his card. Her charming red mouth lifted in a secret smile at the. Alan Richard Hilton, World Correspondent, that was engraved on it. "Shall we have a drink to begin with?" She swung silken smooth legs to the floor and pulled a flask from under some papers on the opposite seat. He didn't look away from the eye filling sauciness that surged forward to strain the stitches of the scarlet sweater as she leaned over.

"Here's to a quick get-away," Alan said as he tipped the flask to his lips.

"Do you a mean a quick get-away from present company?" she asked softly as she drew her feet under her again and leaned against him as casually as though she had known him since cradle days.



"How could I?" he answered, "I meant that I hoped they'd get this train under way some time tonight. The ship for China sails from Seattle at midnight tomorrow and if I'm to keep my job I've got to be on it."

It was to keep him from doing exactly this that Sue was where she was. For Sue was the Acme Detective Agency's best operator and Old Man Hilton was paying her plenty to keep Alan in Seattle until he could get back from Europe and persuade the boy that he wanted him back in the firm now he was through with Emily Tilbby. Old Man Hilton had known the Park Avenue love nest would be empty as soon as the gold digging Emily found out the Hilton millions and their heir

were no longer on speaking terms. That was the reason he had deliberately ousted Alan a year ago.

SHE RAISED TANGLED lashes to look at this last job of hers and thought how lucky this slide had been for her. If Alan hadn't been bored with the delay he'd never have accepted her invitation. He hadn't been in the mood for casual acquaintances; even when they were a toothsome bloneness. Alan felt her glance and looked down at the girl leaning so carelessly against him. Perfume breathed from her hair, and though he was through with the female of the species the blood sang in his ears as he appraised the tempting charms of this particular specimen. His look flamed to desire as his eyes dropped to the two luscious hillocks showing through the lacy knit sweater, and felt the delicious warm thigh press still closer to his own lean strength.

He answered the pressure and she turned with a slow languor until she was in his arms. He dropped deliberate lips to her coaxing ones. One white arm went around his neck and she raised her face to his for another burning caress. His lips were no longer deliberate but clung to hers with a passionate hunger that she answered in a very satisfying manner. And Sue liked the answering; for, though Sue cuddled a mean cuddle at any time, this big ho-fellow made cuddling almost a necessity.

Alan forgot that he was only amusing himself to kill time.

Sue opened her eyes to the heat that was in his as she asked, "Do you expect to find anything in China any nicer than this?"

He laid a kiss against the milky white at the edge of the sweater collar before he answered, "Not even half," then reached again for her lips with an avid mouth, but she squirmed out of his arms.

"Pul-lcase Mister, after all we have just met and the conductor might decide to come through here." Alan came back to the sta-

tionary train but he had lost all wish for it to be on its way.

And Sue's eyes were glistening as she powdered the impudent nose and reddened moist full lips. She stood up and smoothed the tan skirt over gorgeous hips. "Let's walk up to the engine and see what's happening," she proposed. "Falling in love again, never wanted to." Alan's mind supplied the words for the tune Sue was humming and thought they expressed his feelings exactly as he watched the lithe swaying body in front of him.

They watched the steam shovel tearing at the tons of snow that still half covered the engine, until the cold sent them back.

"First call for dinner." The darky gave them a wide toothed grin as he passed through their coach.

"I'll change into something decent and you can take me in to dinner," Sue said, picking up her dressing case and starting for the dressing room.

"I'll order dinner while you're gone," Alan called after her.

Sue's mind was busy as she pulled the sweater over her head and dropped it and her skirt onto a chair. He was still half sulky, she thought, though after Emily she couldn't blame him for being wary. But Sue was going to do her damndest to make him forget that Emily had ever existed and not just because he was a Job either.

Now Sue's damndest was plenty, the mirrors in front of her proved, as they gave back their seductive picture of creamy satin shorts that fitted the flaunting hips as though they were painted on them; inadequate lace cups, overflowing with the quivering white fullness of rosy pointed breasts; and a slender waist that rippled entrancingly as Sue twisted this way and that to reach the bandeau's fasteners. She finally caught them and the bandeau and shorts joined the rest of her things on the chair and Sue was a gleaming rosy youthfulness under the shower.





*It gave them a feeling of intimate coziness
as they sat there in the diner.*

Then out and drying the glistening drops on the thick luxury of a Pullman towel, and covering the enticing body with powder and fresh satin; satin that wasn't any smother nor half as beautiful as the satin it covered. Sue gave a mean chuckle as she pulled sheer webs into place on the neat legs and wriggled velvet pajamas over sensuous hips. She might be marooned on top of a mountain but it wasn't going to keep her from looking like New York. With a last glance at the shining hair, red lips, and sparkling eyes, she saluted her image and went out.

ALAN ROSE AS SHE came down the aisle and his eyes were warm with admiration. Or maybe it was more than admiration; for, as he sat down beside her, they were more than warm.

"The improvement is breathtaking and I thought the original perfect." His voice was a low caress.

"Thank you kindly, sir, she said." Sue quoted mockingly.

"I've ordered dinner, shall we go in?" He rose and held out a helping hand.

It gave them a feeling of intimate coziness in the diner, to know that just outside were majestic snow covered mountains, weird and lonely in the moonlight; while in here were soft lights, gleaming silver, and warmth. Or was there warmth? Sue shivered over her dessert and Alan reached down to feel the steam pipe as he realized the diner had been getting colder and colder. It was barely warm to his touch. The waiter, noticing him, volunteered the reason. "Steam line's broken, sir." They finished their dessert and hurried back to their own car.

Alan brought his coat and threw it over Sue. She held up one side to make room for him and looked at him with daring eyes. He took the dare. His arm went around her and he pulled the vibrant body close against his side. A delicious lethargy of passion claimed them both. She was silent and Alan looked down as he felt her snuggle still cosier to the warmth of his body. Her cheeks were flushed to a new beauty and long black lashes laid a half circle of shadow against them. He gathered her tight to him under the concealing coat and she whispered a throaty, "Nice".

His throat ached with desire as once again his mouth found and held the sweetness of her parted lips. One arm held the distractingly supple hips on his lap and the other hand searched out the yielding warmth of one gorgeous breast.

"Do you love me?" After a long passion drowned minute Sue's voice was a lovely promise.

Alan left her lips to answer. "Love you? I'm mad about you! Mad for you!" He kissed the heavy shadowed lids, the pulsing throat, and the enticing hollow at its base.

"More than you did Emily?" she asked.

His arms loosened with a speed that almost sent her to the floor. "What do you know about Emily?"

Her cheeks still flushed, her eyes bright with ecstasy, she stared at him. For the first time in her business career she had forgotten her job for a man. "Why I—you see . . ."

"I see enough." His sensuous mouth was a cruel twist and his eyes were blue ice. "I've a swell idea that the old man knows something about this. I've been wondering ever since I left New York why I hadn't heard anything from him in some way or other. I suppose after Emily he thought I was following in his footsteps and that from now on I'd have a weakness for women, so he sent one to work on me. I begin to get it all right and, another thing, some day I'll remember where I've seen you before. I'll probably find that it wasn't much of a place if they let you in." He stood tall and sneering in the aisle and Sue tore his coat from her and threw it into his seat.

The conductor came hurrying through the car just as they started to continue the argument. "We'll be highbaling in about an hour. Bet you folks will be glad to get going."

"You win the bet, fellow." Alan's voice was the same hard certainty it had been earlier in the day. "Will you have the porter make up my berth now?"

AS THE TRAIN TORE through the night Sue lay wide-eyed in her berth and tried to tell herself it was only a job and what-the-hell. Six hours later she was still unconvinced; and it was a grey rainy dawn into Seattle. Sue's mood matched the weather as Alan treated her like some cheap pick-up. "Thanks for the good time yesterday." The intimacy of his tone was an insult. "When you see Dad tell him I admire his taste in

temptations." Alan traced an intimate finger across one saucy breast as he laid cruel lips unexpectedly against her trembling mouth; then turned quickly and left the train.

Two hours later he was wrapping a black robe around the hard muscular body to go to the phone and order some mixture and a glass. A good long one might take the rancid taste of last night's affair away.

"Order enough for two," a husky glamorous voice said. So familiar was that remembered voice that he followed orders before he turned from the phone, to see Sue in the doorway of the next suite. Bronze hair still curled enchantingly around a piquant face; red lips were still a pouting invitation; but! black chiffon, that may have been pajamas or may have been the tempting robe of a houri, was not as concealing as velvet.

"So the performance goes on." Alan's voice was sarcastic but his eyes paid covetous homage to the lustrous vibrant beauty.

"Oh no! I only thought as long as we were both strangers in a strange town you might share a drink with me." Her words were careful but her eyes were a shameless proposition.

"I don't suppose you'd try to keep me here until after my boat had sailed, would you?" Alan could grin and enjoy this now he was on his guard. "As long as I know you're going to be disappointed I'll be big hearted and buy you a drink." Ice clinked in the tall glass. He handed her a drink and took his own to a big chair and sat down. "Sit down and I'll tell you where I saw you before; or do you know?"

She shook her head in surprised denial. He had really seen her then. She couldn't imagine where. But then New York was a large village and she had been around a little the last three years.

"You were at a brawl at Pendleton's last year just before he was arrested on that little charge of murder. You must have been the nameless woman that the police said had gotten the inside dope in that affair. I can't say that I blame him for throwing discretion to the winds, after a while with you around. I might have been as foolish myself if . . ."

Sue had had enough. She walked over and one soft hand cracked against his cheek.

HER WRIST WAS CAUGHT in a tanned vise and twisted until she fell into his lap. He held her closer and closer, fitting each dear

(Please turn to page 62)

"YOUNG LADY—"

By
EDGAR ROSS

THE brassiere, Jane discovered, after attempting to adjust it about the perky, pink tufted cones of her round breasts, was much too small. Not that Jane's twin delights were too large. Perish the thought!

Anxiously, she stepped before the slightly peeled mirror of her vanity and examined the reflection therein at great and careful length. Her seeking fingers cupped the erect resiliency of her bosom, measuring. No, they were still the same marble-perfect projections, perfect companions to her gracefully curved hips, her flat, sea-shell torso, and the blonde loveliness of her facial features. Adversity had neither detracted nor added to their shape or form.

Jane held up the useless brassiere, dangling it from one what-used-to-be pink strap. There could be only one other reason for the misfit. The brassiere—suffering from constant, repetitive washings—had shrunk beyond redemption. That, in itself, was no great calamity. Brassieres would shrink. But how to buy another with a total cash capital of 31 cents! That was the problem.

It had been a problem—this lack of finances—for longer than Jane cared to remember. Jobs not only were scarce, but extinct. Of course, propositions had come her way. There was the burlesque impresario whose fat, greasy hands had fumbled at her breast two minutes after she stepped into his office. There was the "fly-by-night" stock manipulator, who suggested combining "pleasure" and business. There was the restaurant proprietor whose lean, nervous fingers made indicative forays into her bodice and beneath the hem of her skirt. Yes, there had been jobs, but all of them were based on one thing—sex.

Jane's objections to bartering her nature-given charm for sustenance did not come out



Anxiously she stepped before the mirror of her vanity and examined the reflection therein.

of a false sense of propriety or a smug, moral code which brooked no deviation. It was a result of breeding and environment.

In Beaver Falls, the Carrs had been people of importance. Jane's father owned the largest mill in town. Jane's mother was president of the Woman's Club, and a leading civic worker. They read good books, discussed interesting things. Jane had been

reared in this decent, respectable atmosphere, not prudish, but clean. Then, the crash. Her father's suicide and her mother's passing of a broken heart. In one year, the entire structure of their house of happiness had crumbled on its foundations. There was nothing left—nothing but the ashes of memory.

Beaver Falls was sympathetic, but Beaver Falls had its own problems. The city seemed to beckon. There was industry and the moving wheels of progress. Certainly a bright, clever twenty-year-old girl could find something.

It had been five months now and there was nothing.

She shrugged her finely molded shoulders and turned away from the mirror. Her breasts quivered gelatinously. New York would have to accept her without a brassiere until such time as New York provided her with the wherewithal to purchase one. A vagrant thought passed through her mind. From what she had seen, the male population of the city would welcome this. As it was, men ogled her on the streets, in subways and wherever she happened to be. Now, sans a covering for her splendid breasts, panic would ensue.

She dropped on the bed and picked up the morning paper. Regularly, for months now, she had scanned the *Help Wanted* columns without result. Sighing wearily, she opened to the Classified Advertisements page. A bold faced ad under the *Female Help Wanted* section caught her eye. She raced through it:

YOUNG LADY, refined, educated, desired as bettering influence on wealthy man's prodigal son. Must have patience, tact, and endurance. Ample compensation for right party. W. W. Allen, 1000 Fifth Avenue.

It read like a fairy tale. Jane repeated the important phrase: ". . . bettering influence on prodigal son . . ." over and over again. It was a strange advertisement, out of the general run of things. But somehow, she matched the requirements perfectly. "*Young lady, refined, educated . . . must have patience, tact and endurance.*"

She had all that—and no brassiere! How would it seem to apply for a position requiring refinement with her breasts bouncing about in her bodice? Gritting her teeth, Jane faced the mirror again in an attempt at making the net garment do, at least for the interview. She inhaled deeply, covered the tops of the white hills with the shrunken cups. It was a pull and a tussle, but finally the bras-

siere went on, almost choking Jane with its tightness, but serving effectively to quiet the quiver of her bosom.

She got into clothes—worn but neat—as quickly as possible. At the corner drug store ten cents of her thirty-one went for orange juice and coffee. Nine-thirty found her ringing the front door bell of a sumptuous limestone residence on Fifth Avenue.

A LIVERIED BUTLER opened the door. Nervously, Jane explained her mission. The flunkey eyed her with that calm disdain so habitual to butlers, ushered her into a foyer. He departed silently, and a moment later Jane heard a masculine voice raised in annoyance.

"No!" it boomed. "I won't see another damned one! I'm sorry I ran the ad! I don't need a bedfellow for him! Every chorus girl in town's been here this morning! Send her away! Tell her the job is filled!"

Jane's heart sank. Here was opportunity melting into nothingness. She swallowed hard, bit her lower lip and resolutely stepped forward in the direction the butler had taken. A door confronted her at the end of the foyer. The voice came from the room behind it. Quaking, Jane opened the door and stepped across the threshold.

"I'm sorry, sir," she murmured, "but I couldn't help hearing you and—"

Walter Allen, tall, broad shouldered and distinguished, gaped at Jane in mild wonderment. The butler frowned distastefully. He puffed his chest out pompously.

"I'm sorry, Miss, but the position has been filled. You'll have to go!"

Jane's lips trembled. She fought hard to stem a flow of tears, but somehow they seeped into her eyes, dampening them. The butler was edging her out when Walter Allen spoke.

"All right, Jenkins, I'll see her," he said.

Jane's face brightened. The butler emitted a grunt, bowed low and left the room. When the door closed behind him, Allen indicated a chair.

"If you'll be seated Miss—er—"

"Carr," Jane whispered. "Jane Carr. I'm awfully thankful for—"

He assumed a stern demeanor, passing the flat of his hand over his iron-gray hair. "You haven't the job yet, Miss Carr," he said. "Don't be premature."

"But I'm certain I'll get it!" Her voice was rippling and cheerful. "I know I'm qualified and I'm *not* a chorus girl."

The ghost of a smile played about his lips.

"That is something. What are you?"

"Just a small town girl out of a job, Mr. Allen." Each time she breathed the too-tight brassiere cut into her breasts. "In great need of one, too!" If only he knew how great the need!

"Well, I'm afraid you're much too fragile and too pretty for this assignment, Miss Carr. My son is a terror."

of-the-mill arrests. I have gotten him out of twenty jails and away from the clutches of a dozen fortune seekers. I'm at the end of my rope with him. I advertised in the hope



"Hello cutie,"
he greeted.
"Dance?"

Jane leaned forward anxiously, her eyes pleading. "I would like to try," she said softly. "Of course, I don't know the details, but I'd do anything legitimate."

Walter Allen nodded approvingly. He had been admiring her quiet, refined charm with a great deal of interest. Of course, she was pretty and she was shapely. And yet, both might be assets for what he had in mind.

"Briefly, Miss Carr, this is the situation," he began. "I have a son, Richard, by name. Thus far he has been ejected from more colleges in this country than I ever knew existed. Thus far he has managed to get into more trouble than a carload of monkeys. Thus far he has forced me to expend countless thousands of dollars settling damage suits, breach-of-promise suits, libel suits and ordinary run-

I could get some nice girl to try and set him straight. I thought if he interested himself in a nice girl, something might come of it. There you have it. Now do you think you'd care to risk yourself in the hands of this young maniac?"

"Yes!" Jane came out with the affirmative answer unhesitatingly. "What your son really needs is a good whipping, but since the whipping post has been antiquated, I'd be glad to try my method. How do you propose to go about it, Mr. Allen?"

"Above all, Dick mustn't know I'm behind this. He won't get wind of the advertisement because he never reads a paper. I thought you would manage to meet him casually. The rest, of course, would be up to you. Frankly, I feel guilty sending you into a hornet's nest.

But as long as you're going into it with your eyes open, all right. However, I won't be responsible for what happens. It's all your own risk."

Jane nodded eagerly. "Agreed."

He brought a check book out of his pocket. "Your salary will be fifty dollars a week plus expenses until such time as we see the experiment successful or a failure. I'll give you a check for two hundred now. If you need more, either call me by phone or come in before ten in the morning. Dick's never around then. Either sleeping or drunk. I don't want him to see you in this house, or know anything about our arrangement."

At the door, Jane thanked him profusely. He patted her arm. "Not at all, my dear. Remember the name of the place he frequents—Nick's—you'll find him there almost any night. Good luck!"

HALF OF JANE'S new-found wealth went for the outfit of evening clothes she wore when she entered the smartly sophisticated night club known as Nick's, early the same evening. Evidently it was not unusual for women to frequent Nick's unescorted, since neither doorman nor head waiter regarded her in the manner she had expected.

With her wrap draped over the back of her chair, Jane's appearance indicated that her employer's money had been well spent. A white satin evening gown, remarkable for its brevity of material, but outstanding for its daring design, clothed her supple, youthfully curved figure.

It had taken a good deal of courage on Jane's part to appear in the gown without even a net bandeau covering her breasts. But the sales clerk had convinced her it was both unnecessary and unbecoming. Now Jane was almost forced to admit agreement. The bodice of the gown, low cut but clinging, cupped her breasts naturally, allowing their rigid projection full play, and forcing the upper curves of white flesh out of the neckline.

Below her splendid bosom, the satin followed the young arch of her figure, draped about her thighs, and fell in a cascade at her slender ankles. Beneath the long, flowing skirt, only a pair of sheer panties covered her thighs and hips.

A waiter approached for her order. Nervously, Jane scanned the bill of fare. This was her first experience in a night club, and, to cap the climax, it had to be "solo"! She ran her eyes down the list of drinks. The

name: *Planter's Punch*, sounded enticing and cool. She ordered it.

In the interim, she studied the dimly lit interior of Nick's together with its clientele. Mr. Allen had given her definite instructions as to how to recognize his son, Richard. Not only that, but she had seen his picture.

"He'll be the loudest person present," Allen had said, "and unfortunately, one of the handsomest. You can't miss him!"

To all appearances, the "prodigal" had yet to arrive. But there were others present who noticed Jane's entrance, and who had been ogling her ever since. A moment before the waiter returned with her order, a slightly tipsy gent made his way across the floor and drew up at her table.

"Hello, cutie," he greeted. "Dance?"

Goose flesh formed on Jane's breasts. She was tongue-tied and unable to reply. He took her silence for consent, and before she knew it, she was out on the polished floor, going through the motions of a fox trot.

"What little heaven did you drop out of, cutie?" her partner queried, tightening his arm about her waist and pressing her so close that the peaks of her breasts hurt from boring into his stiffly starched shirt. "Didn't know they let angels into Nick's."

"I'm from out of town," Jane replied, frightened by his intensesness.

He grinned. "Oooh! A country girl, huh! Whoopee! Wait'll Dickie hears about that! Yeah, wait'll Dickie sees you!"

Jane's heart leaped. "Who—who is this Dickie?" she asked breathlessly.

"Y'never heard of Dickie Allen?" His tone was incredulous. Then he giggled. "Of course you didn't! Forgot you were country girl. Well, you'll see him! Yes, ma'am! He'll be here soon! And when he lams you—zowie!"

No sooner were the words out of the inebriate's mouth than a great hubbub emanated from the night club entrance. The man whose left arm encircled Jane's waist, and whose right hand was doing queer things in the vicinity of her bosom, jerked his head around. He grinned and stopped dancing as he recognized the source of the commotion.

"Here's Dickie now!" he blurted. "Hey, Dickie!"

JANE WAS A BUNDLE of nerves, a shuddering cake of ice, as Dick Allen approached.

He was handsome, that she had to admit. Tall, broad shouldered, possessed of smiling gray eyes, a firm mouth, and an almost angelic face. His ash-blond hair was combed back from his forehead in a careless part. He stared at Jane wonderingly, his eyes ap-

"Go ahead!" he muttered. "Don't stay here! I'll get some one to take your place."



praising her figure with almost a caressive interest.

"Dickie," Jane's unintroduced dancing partner chortled, "this is—this is—"

Jane drew a deep breath. "Jane Carr," she murmured.

"From the country, Dickie!" the semi-drunk bubbled. "Imagine! From the country!"

Somehow Jane found herself lifted into Dick Allen's arms, her toes barely touching the dance floor. Before she knew it she was being danced away with graceful ease, a

capable arm circling her waist, and a firm hand lifting her aloft.

"You're positively stunning," she heard her new partner say. "Where on earth did you come from?"

Jane regained a little of her poise, despite the fact that utterly strange sensations had taken complete possession of her; sensations whose focal points were the tips of her breasts, and whose field of operations was every inch of her tingling flesh.

"I—I came from heaven," she kidded.

Dick shook his handsome head. "Oh, no! Must have been a better place than that.

You're too marvelous for heaven." His hand, resting on her thinly sheathed left hip, toyed with the velvet softness beneath the gown material.

Jane caught the faint odor of liquor on his breath, the more pungent scent of cheap perfume on his tuxedo lapel.

"You've been drinking and you've been with a girl," she accused. "Is that nice?"

"Which?" He grinned boyishly. "The drinking or the girl?"

"Both!" She retorted quickly.

"Well, the liquor was pretty good, but now

that I've seen you, the girl was awful!" He stopped suddenly in the center of the floor. "Say, you don't even know who I am, do you?"

Jane shook her head. "No, I don't, except that your first name is Dickie."

Both hands slid to her waist and squeezed it. "That's not the half of it, baby. I'm Richard Wellington Allen, and my old man is one of the wealthiest guys in these United States! How does that sound to you, huh?"

Jane hid the hurt expression in her eyes. Now she felt intensely sorry for Walter Allen, more sorry for his son. He was so clean looking, so young, and yet so completely irresponsible. Somehow, the sensual manipulation of his fingers on her failed to arouse her adversely. It was almost pleasant. She led him to a table, found seats for both of them.

IT WAS THREE A. M. when he reacted sympathetically to her suggestion that they leave Nick's. In the interim they had danced until Jane's feet ached, drank until there was a pool of liquor under the table where Jane had deposited most of her cocktails, and attempted to talk. More than once she had been forced to adroitly remove his fingers from the cleft of her breasts or laughingly slap an errant hand making progress over her knees.

In a taxi, Dick gave a different address than his father's Fifth Avenue residence. Jane perked up.

"Is—is that where you live?" she questioned.

He tried to kiss her, but she pulled away. "Sure, baby," he mumbled. "Swell place."

To contradict him would be to create suspicion. Jane held her peace and waited. The taxi finally pulled up in front of a large hotel.

"You're coming with me, baby," Dick announced, helping her out and paying off the cabbie.

She protested feebly, but to no avail. Her heart was beating thunderously as he led her through the ornate lobby and into an elevator. At least, there was one thing she could do. That was put him to bed and continue the rehabilitation the following night. She felt guilty at not having accomplished anything as yet, but consoled herself with hope for the future.

Once in the room, Dick closed the door and nonchalantly turned the key in the lock. He removed his coat and jacket.

"That's a good idea," Jane said. "You need the sleep. Tomorrow night—"

He laughed softly, coming to her suddenly and throwing his arms around her waist. In a flash his mouth was down on hers. Jane tensed involuntarily. It was the first time a man had kissed her with such fervency. Her whole mouth burned and her breasts were shot through with hot sparks. She punched at his chest, trying to twist her lips away from him.

As quickly as he had captured her, he released her. He wasn't smiling now. His face was dark.

"Sure!" he muttered. "I know what it is! I'm not good enough for you, am I? I'm just a cheap drunkard who hangs around cheap women, is that it?" He sat down. "Well, I'm not going to touch you, see? I know class when I see it. You're the first girl I ever met who made me feel like a heel!" He waved his arm towards the door. "Go ahead! Don't stay here! I'll get someone to take your place!"

Jane's eyes dampened. An invisible hand propelled her over to him, brought her down close beside him.

"Dickie!" she murmured. "Dickie!"

It all seemed so natural until his fingers slipped into her bodice and touched the throbbing fullness of a breast. Then she wanted to pull away, to beat him off, but something cried out in her for surcease from the burning frenzy of her heart. It was all so new and thrilling and stupendous.

"Dickie!" she gasped. "Oh, Dickie!"

His lips found her throat, sent ecstasies of emotion hurtling through her. One hand was on a firm mound, the other caressing her velvet knee. Now she could only sigh softly, wait for him to crush her.

IT WAS NINE-THIRTY the following morning when Jane rang the bell at 1000 Fifth Avenue. She had a bundle in her hand. Her eyes were red rimmed from crying, and her face haggard. The butler answered the summons, recognized her and ushered her into the foyer. She forced the package into his hands, together with a roll of bills.

"Give this to Mr. Allen, please," she said softly. "Just tell him I failed miserably. Tell him I was like the rest—the chorus girls he spoke of. Tell him I'm sorry." She turned to leave. Her hand was on the door knob when a joyous shout echoed through the foyer. Jane turned quickly. Her cheeks paled. Dickie was running towards her open armed.

(Please turn to page 59)

GOOD TIME JIMMY

By
PATSY HUNT

JIMMY was the typical rich man's son. He was tall and blond and consciously good looking with a sun tan tinged with red that comes of following the sun the year round. His laugh came as easy to his lips as his hand went to his pocketbook. He had hundreds of friends in all the walks of life. Moe Rutterheim, who ran a night club, said Jimmy was one swell guy, and nearly bent himself double ushering him to his best table on the nights when Jimmy honored his establishment.

The girls of the various show ensembles had only the highest praise for the one and only heir to the Chauncey millions, for Jimmy literally drooled diamond anklets, ruby necklaces and sapphire bracelets. And when Jimmy Chauncey established one of these show girls in the swank splendor of a lofty penthouse, the girls always knew that they were in for plenty of clothes, jewels and luxuries as long as Jimmy's passion was flamed. He tired quickly of his mistresses but he never actually went back on any of them. He kept a card index and on Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day and the Fourth of July all the has-beens of his life received an expensive token of his remembrance and generosity.

Yes, Jimmy was a good time guy.

Jimmy had faith in his friends, too. Know that so many people liked him made his heart swell in his big chest, made a little lump of gratitude rise in his bronzed throat. Whenever someone tossed a party in his honor tears would well up in his gray eyes and his mind would seethe until he found some way of showing his appreciation. He usually showed it with cash or expensive gifts. He was lavish and generous almost to the point of fanaticism with everyone . . . man, woman or child . . . who made any show of liking him or cultivating him.

Maizie Buckrum, the voluptuous little blonde of the *Happy Days* chorus, once told Jimmy as they sat side by side at a theatre manager's dinner party: "You're a chump,

Jimmy. A big hearted sap. Don't you know that if you lost your dough that all these good time pals of yours would fade into thin air? It isn't a pleasant thing to realize because everyone likes to think he is being adored for himself alone, but you ought to wake up and look around. You aren't a suckling babe, you know. You've shed your diapers and your teething rings."

Jimmy had felt that Maizie Buckrum had socked him a terrific wallop in the la panza. He hadn't paid much attention to Maizie before she had said that. He knew that she had a pretty hot reputation. Jimmy, himself, had noticed that Maizie's affairs were always fly-by-night affairs, very short lived, and he had kept pretty much away from her. He preferred to initiate a newcomer into the mistress racket rather than taking on an experienced veteran.

Jimmy had turned then and had looked at Maizie. She hadn't looked in the least like a rounder. She was a lovely little thing with her starry blue eyes, her straight nose and nicely chiseled chin, her smooth slightly waving golden hair. And unlike other veterans she didn't have that hard, arrogant expression. His eyes had dropped to her breast and in her pose, with her elbows on the edge of the table, he had seen down the bosom of her evening gown. Her breasts were very admirable . . . snowy white, lusciously tipped and moist looking, as if dew had settled on them and made them glisten. Altogether tempting.

"Would you go back on me, too, Maizie, if I were to lose all my money?" Jimmy had asked.

"Yes, I reckon so, Jimmy," Maizie had answered, pursing her lovely lips. "I play the suckers first, last and always. I'm ambitious. No walking the streets in my middle age, believe you me! If I didn't like you so much, Jimmy, I wouldn't admit this. But you really ought to get on to yourself and stop being such a dumb cluck. Everyone

laughs at you behind your back. They call you good time Jimmy."

"Oh, you're wrong, Maizie," he had argued. "I haven't a friend who wouldn't give me the shirt off his back."

Maizie had laughed then . . . a rippling little laugh, sweet as the bluebird's song in the Spring. "Yes, they'd give you the shirts off their backs, all right. Oh, yes they would! Just about as likely as a cat giving birth to a flock of elephants!"

FOR DAYS THIS CONVERSATION with Maizie worried and disturbed Jimmy. Every time someone would throw a party in his honor, every time the fellows would slap him on the back and bawl, "Good Time Jimmy, our pal!" every time one of the chorines would curl her soft, perfumed arms around his neck, disrobe for his delectation, Jimmy would wonder in his heart: *"Would it be the same if I were poor . . . if I didn't have a thin dime to my name?"*

Jimmy reasoned with himself. Being liked for oneself alone was probably a sentimental fallacy. Now take away the money and . . . Jimmy's mind went into a bog. He'd never know the answer, of course, because his father had \$50,000,000 and they seldom used up the interest on that in a year.

Lightly he cursed Maizie Buckrum. If she hadn't tried to open his eyes to something that probably didn't even exist, he would be happy now instead of gloomy and doubting. He had liked being generous and spending, he had liked the slaps on his back, the ingratiating smiles, the affection if not love of his mistresses. He had liked having hundreds and hundreds of friends. He had liked being a good time guy.

But as the days went on Jimmy couldn't get Maizie off his mind. She had been frank . . . she had probably thought that she was being honest. In all the people he had questioned on the subject of whether they would like him as well poor as they did rich, not a one had batted a doubting eye. The fellows had slapped him on the back and had assured him of their undying friendship; the girls had cuddled closer to him, pressed their warm bodies to his, had maneuvered his hand to their breasts, purring, "Oh, Jimmy, angel, I'd love you if you weren't anything but a sandwich man."

For a while he had been convinced, he had felt all comfy and snug and happy inside. He had mentally called Maizie Buckrum a

goof and a nut. But the moment he was alone Maizie's honest blue eyes, the sincerity of her voice, would ring back through his head and her unpleasant psychology would torment him.

"That dame's in my hair!" Jimmy belated to his reflection this night while dressing for a party being given in honor of his twenty-fourth birthday. "Somehow I can't forget her. I don't know whether it's what she said or whether it's because she's so beautiful and yet, somehow, so aloof. And, too, Maizie's a veteran. I couldn't kiss her without feeling that she was comparing me to one of her many lovers, I couldn't touch her breasts without feeling that she was going to say, "Oh, Tommy Dickerson knew how to do that much better than you do, Jimmy." He didn't like veterans and he didn't want any part of them.

But nevertheless Jimmy passed up the birthday party in his honor that night; in fact, he completely forgot it. He was waiting at the stage door when Maizie came out into the narrow little alley, her theatrical makeup still on, her body hidden by a long expensive mink coat.

Maizie saw Jimmy standing there, slouching against a lamp post, and waved lightly to him. But when she started across the street to a limousine that was obviously opening its door for her, Jimmy caught up with her, his breath short in his throat, and said,

"Listen, Maizie, I've been thinking about you."

"Oh, not really, Mr. Chauncey!" said Maizie, arching her slim golden brows. "Thinking, eh? Well, I am surprised. I didn't know you knew how!"

"No fooling, Maizie. I want to see you. I want to talk with you."

"This isn't going to lead up to a proposition, is it, good time guy?"

"We'll . . ."

"Oh, then it is going to lead up to a proposition! And aren't you ashamed, your engagement to Patricia Eversham being announced in all the papers only this morning!"

Jimmy frowned. That was another thing that was worrying him. Patricia. Somehow he had got into his head that Patricia was marrying him for his money. Patricia was a lovely little thing, soft as a kitten, dark as night with her thundery blue eyes and her hair as sleek and black as polished ebony.

When he was with Patricia, when they lounged side by side on the settee in her

father's library, he never doubted her love, never even thought of anything but Patricia's hair and Patricia's deeply blue eyes and Patricia's soft flesh, the amazing texture of a morning glory's mouth, under his caressing fingers.

That Patricia didn't respond passionately to his love had nothing to do with the doubts that stalked his mind when he was not with her. He couldn't expect her to abandon her maidenly reserve, to know all the kinks of love making like the Broadway veterans or the mistresses who had succeeded each other as chatelaine's of his penthouse. Patricia had had a sheltered life; she had been educated in a private school; she had been closely and carefully chaperoned.

"I want to talk with you, Maizie!" Jimmy went on, insistently. "I've got to talk with you."

Maizie pursed her scarlet lips for a second and a suggestion of a frown flitted across her startlingly white brow. Then she shrugged her milk shoulders, gave a bow indicative of "you first Alphonse" and fell into step by Jimmy's side as they headed for his long, underslung roadster parked at the mouth of the alley.

They went to Jimmy's penthouse. It had been three months since a woman had graced this luxurious suite but the air was still strong with feminine perfumes, mixed blends, and there were mute evidences of former occupants . . . lipstick smears on the walls, on the brocades of the Louis XIV chairs . . . perfumed salts lining the bath shelves.

Maizie took off the mink coat and flung it carelessly to the sofa. She was still in the costume of her last act . . . a sparkling coruscated bandeau on her full breasts, a wisp of form-fitting theatrical panties studded with rhinestone stars around her full hips. Her sandals glittered with rhinestone stars on heel and toe.

AT FIRST JIMMY DIDN'T pay much attention to Maizie. He avoided looking at her. She was a veteran and he didn't want any part of a veteran. He wanted only to talk with her about her worrying psychology, he wanted to see if she wouldn't say something that would clear up his mental fog. He wanted to talk about Patricia . . . if Maizie thought Patricia was marrying him for his money.

He fished in his pocket for a cigarette, stuck it between his lips and burnt his finger

on the spurt of the match. Maizie had an unlit cigarette dangling from the corner of her mouth and it was when Jimmy crossed to her with a burning match, shielding the little blaze from a draught with his hands, that he became feverishly conscious of Maizie . . . her golden hair, her even beautiful features, the voluptuous breasts that seemed as round and inflated as balloons, the long, tapering, soft white legs. The match scorched his fingers and he blew it out and tossed it to the hearth.

"So you aren't any more fire-proof than you're fool-proof, are you, Jimmy?" Maizie laughed, lightly.

"I should be," said Jimmy, gloomily, sinking to the sofa by her side, "with you around."

"I won't burn you, Jimmy," she said, her blue eyes holding to his with a magnetism that made Jimmy's blood pound through his body. Her face was so frank, so completely artless, that he felt almost uncomfortable under her stare. It was as if she looked through him and saw all the pettiness of his nature, the sins of his past, his digressions.

"I play the suckers, Jimmy," Maizie went on. "I take everything and give nothing. That's why none of my crushes lasts more than a few days. By the time the men learn that I'm not putting out, I have bracelets and anklets and what-not converted into cash or bonds and salted away for the proverbial rainy day. I told you once at a dinner party that I wouldn't be walking the streets in my middle age. I never did like walking much, anyway."

Jimmy's lips fell a little apart in sheer wonderment. "Why are you telling me this, Maizie?" he asked. "You claim I'm the biggest sucker of them all. You could take me in with very little effort and you know it." He was looking at her now, hard into her eyes. He was beginning to understand why Maizie, whom he had thought a veteran, didn't have the look of a veteran . . . why she still seemed innocent and young and altogether desirable. She had been working a racket and keeping her skirts clear.

Maizie smiled and Jimmy noticed for the first time how utterly lovely was her smile. Her nose crinkled up a little and her eyes almost danced beneath the long, thick black lashes. He saw for the first time, too, that Maizie was a girl not over twenty with a decidedly impish and mischievous streak in her nature.

"Perhaps I like you, Jimmy," she said,

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a little wistfully, "perhaps I like you better than any man I ever met." She hesitated for a second and her even white little tips of teeth bit down on her nether lip. "I did try to make you once, Jimmy . . . not because you were a champion sucker . . . but because . . . oh, never mind. Skip it!"

The blood was stirring warmly, excitedly in Jimmy's veins. He was conscious of a strange emotion . . . a strange feeling about Maizie, about her arms spread out in his arms. He shook his head to clear the hallucination. Maizie wasn't at all what he had thought her . . . Maizie was . . . she was . . .

Suddenly Jimmy forgot everything he wanted to ask Maizie . . . he forgot that only this morning his engagement to Patricia Eversham had been announced . . . he forgot all his doubts and fears and what might happen to good time Jimmy if he lost his money. He caught Maizie in his arms, blindly, passionately, and covered her body with kisses, tearing her hair a little under the force of his passion, leaving bruises on her neck and breasts and arms where his fingers dug into her tender flesh. And strangely enough Maizie, who took all and gave nothing, was returning Jimmy's wild, fresh young kisses, her breasts pressed to his chest, her body straining excitedly toward his.

ONLY ONCE, LIKE the swift thrust of a rapier through his brain, did Jimmy remember that Maizie had admitted once that if he lost his money she would probably go back on him like all the rest, that he was good time Jimmy just so long as his cash held out. But with Maizie's lips stirring softly on his, with her young bosom pressing into his chest, he forgot everything but the woman he was loving.

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days. Jimmy had known the night before the papers blazed the catastrophe to the world what had happened to the House of Chauncey. He had thought of calling up Maizie, had even lifted the receiver and dialed the number of the penthouse. Then he had remembered that he was good time Jimmy to her just so long as he was the one and only heir to the Chauncey \$50,000,000. Maizie, he guessed, was still in the penthouse, probably reading about the crash. He had paid four years rent in advance on the penthouse and in a moment of generosity had turned the lease in her name over to her.

Jimmy fumbled in his pockets and found a key. He closed his eyes and remembered the pounding of his heart, the dizzy rapture that had always come over him when he had inserted that key in the lock of the penthouse. Maizie hadn't been one thing like any of the women he had ever known. In a way he suspected that he loved her . . . more than he did Patricia . . . more than he loved life itself.

Only one thing had kept him from throwing Patricia over and marrying Maizie. It was her peculiar psychology. A fellow didn't want a wife who would walk out on him the moment he was poor. He had never thought in his wildest dreams that his father would ever become bankrupt; but just the same there were Maizie's words rattling around in his brain. Good time Jimmy just so long as the cash held out!

Jimmy started to dress. Tonight was the night when some of the fellows were throwing a party in his honor, celebrating the cutting of his third wisdom tooth.

He whistled gaily as he went about dressing. The shower on his naked body brought out a rosy flush all over him and made him feel, as he always said, "like a plush horse". He was almost in his tails, top coat and high silk topper when the telephone rang and Ted Walsh, his voice very gloomy and sympathetic, said over the wire:

"Saw the papers this morning, Jimmy, old boy. Too bad. Cleaned you all out, didn't it? Tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk."

Tears came up in Jimmy's eyes. Good old Ted. True blue. A brick. He was glad that he had loaned Ted \$20,000 for his mother's operation, his father's operation, his little cousin's operation, his cook's operation. In fact, almost every time he had come across Ted at parties some one in his family or service was in need of an operation. Ted ran

into bad luck more than anyone he had ever known.

Then Ted said, "We're calling off the party tonight, Jimmy. See you later." And without another word hung up the receiver.

A desperate frown came over Jimmy's bronzed forehead. He had hardly had a second in which to think of Ted, in which to realize that Ted's action was something that would call for a nice, sarcastic "I told you so" from Maizie, when Patricia telephoned.

"Jimmy, darling. Dad isn't feeling well," she had purred over the wire. "I'm leaving on the *Rex* tonight with him. We're going to stay over in Europe for four or five years. See you later, old sock."

Jimmy's heart raced to his throat. He held his breath. Perhaps Patricia hadn't seen the papers, perhaps she didn't know, hadn't heard.

"Father went bankrupt this morning, Patsy," he said, tremulously. "Did . . . did you hear about it?"

"Oh, yes, Jimmy. I had it with my eggs and cereal this morning. I've got to hurry now, Jimmy. See you later. 'Bye now.'"

And Patricia hung up.

Another "I told you so" for Maizie, thought Jimmy, sinking to a chair and burying his head in his hands. Not that he gave a damn about missing the party, not that he really gave a damn about losing Patricia. It was just that Maizie had been right. He, Jimmy Chauncey, was good time Jimmy just so long as the cash held out.

AT TWELVE O'CLOCK Jimmy got into his roadster and headed for the penthouse. He felt no bitterness with Maizie. She had been frank from the beginning, she had been honest. He wouldn't go to her now, cringing and moaning and groaning. He'd just go in as cocky as he had ever been in the old days, he'd say something that would make her shoot off her mouth with "I told you so's". Then he'd give her the key to the penthouse and scam.

As Maizie opened the door to him, Jimmy held his breath. He had never seen her look so beautiful. She had on a cerise negligee that was as pellucid as glass. It draped in graceful folds around her body and was caught up at the hip with a prodigious bow of chiffon. The streamers of the bow flowed down over her full hips and melted into the prehensile train at her cerise satin sandals. She wore nothing beneath it and the sight

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of her firm breasts throwing crescent shaped shadows under their impertinent pouts made Jimmy a little dizzy. He didn't dare trust himself to look at the rest of her body through the flimsy material.

He scowled at Maizie. Indeed he used every effort to look as ferocious as a mad-dened bull. He stalked past her into the apartment, giving her sweetly perfumed body a rough brush with his elbow.

"Well, go ahead and spill it, Maizie!" he thundered on, turning on her. "Tell me I'm good time Jimmy on a raft in the middle of the big drink. Call me a dumb cluck. Get all your 'I told you so's' off your chest because they're in order now, see. Patricia gave me the air, the fellows at the club when I went there for dinner tonight scuttled off like scared mice at the sight of me. Afraid I wanted a loan, I guess. Ted Walsh called off the party in honor of the cutting of my third wisdom tooth. And you . . . you're just like the rest. A cheap little chiseler! But you were honest, I'll have to hand you that. You told me you'd stick just so long as I had dough to put out. I didn't go into our affair blind. But any way you word it you're just like the rest . . . cheap and greedy and . . ."

Maizie's eyes were blazing now. "You dumb cluck!" she spat out. "You low-down so-and-so! You wanted to hear me say 'I told you so' . . . well, here it is . . . I told you so. I told you so. I told you so. I told you so!" And she was stomping her foot and beating her fist against her soft young breasts. "Now get out and stay out. I never want to see you again. Good time Jimmy! Nertz. Nertz. Nertz!" And with a terrific push she shoved him out of the door and slammed it viciously behind him.

For a moment Jimmy just stood there. Maizie had been worse than any of them. He had been prepared for her "I told you so's", but he hadn't expected her to put on a scene like the one he had just witnessed. He pulled a white silk handkerchief out of his pocket and mopped his brow. No, he hadn't expected Maizie to put on a scene like that. As he went to stuff the handkerchief back in his pocket a key fell out and struck the marble foyer with a metallic click. He leaned and picked it up and tossed it up and down in his palm for a second, as if contemplating what to do with it.

Then he turned and inserted it in the door. He would open it, throw the key into the

drawing room and get on his way. That would show Maizie that he wouldn't be around any more cluttering up her life . . . that would show Maizie that if he wasn't a good time guy any more he was a good sport. He wondered why the hell it made so much difference to him what Maizie thought of him. But he didn't stop to think. He knew the answer . . . and he didn't trust himself to admit it. He loved Maizie Buckrum as he had never loved before nor would ever love again.

Jimmy opened the door, slowly, quietly. He couldn't face another of Maizie's angry tirades. He stopped for a second and listened for there was Maizie over in the corner talking on the telephone, sobbing and sniffing and blowing her nose on a tiny wisp of handkerchief. Maizie was saying to someone:

"Jimmy Chauncey is broke, Mr. Edwards. (sniff, sniff) Flat on his can, see? (sob, sob) If you can't get a refund on this penthouse and send it to him will you please, sir, convert those two necklaces and that tiara into cash and send the money to him. (sniff, sniff) Don't let him think I had anything to do with it. Just let him think I moved out of this penthouse and that the money is rightfully his. (sob, sob) No. Mr. Edwards, I'm . . . I'm . . . not crazy. Yes, I'm crazy I guess. I'm crazy about Jimmy. I'd been waiting all evening for him to come so I could tell him (sniff, sniff) just how much I loved him, to tell him (sob, sob) that his money didn't make any difference to me. But he came and lit into me and called me cheap (sob) and greedy (sniff) and a chiseler (sob, sniff, sob, sniff). I got mad and threw him out and told him never to come back again. But, oh-h-h-h-h-h, Mr. Edwards . . ."

"Maizie!"

Jimmy was crossing the long, heavily carpeted drawing room to the little girl in the cerise negligee. Maizie saw him and dropped the telephone to the floor with a terrific crash and a buzzing signal of the operator who wondered what the hell was happening to that party.

And plenty was happening to that party. Maizie was in Jimmy's arms and her lips were beneath his and his fingers, hungrily, greedily, were sweeping over her whole body as if he wanted to love her in one terrific gesture.

As they both sat in the deep armchair later Maizie pulled a little away from Jimmy and folded her arms around him. Her breasts, in

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that pose, arched out, the little tips dancing bright and red on their smooth white surfaces.

"Oh, Jimmy," she said on a long sigh, "I'm glad you're broke, angel. That means that Patricia is out of your life forever and maybe it means that you'll marry me if I propose real nicely. Would you, Jimmy?"

JIMMY MOVED and rested one palm on her bosom. "I was going to ask you to marry me, Maizie, as soon as I caught my breath. I'm . . . I'm still panting a little." Then he added, "But we'll be real poor. You know that, don't you?"

"The whole world knows that after the morning's papers, Jimmy," she said softly. "But we can manage. I have about fifty thousand salted away. It is enough."

"Oh, I have a little money, too," said Jimmy. "About six million dollars. From my mother's estate. Dad could never get his fingers on it, you know."

"Six million dollars? And we'll be poor!"

"Well, that's poor compared to fifty million, Maizie. I feel poor."

"Poor and hungry and out on the streets, I guess!" said Maizie, curling her arms around him. "Poor big time Jimmy! Anyway you've learned your lesson and won't you be able to show those good time friends of yours a thing or two when they learn that you still have six million simoleons. Really, it makes me want to laugh. Patricia! Ted Walsh! Oh, my!"

But Jimmy was kissing Maizie now and all thought of money and good time friends was burnt up and destroyed in the heat of their fiery emotions.

PEPPY PALS

(Continued from page 2)

Dear Sir:

I am a lonesome sailor and would like to correspond with some female pen pals. I am 21 years old, weigh 140 pounds, grey eyes and brown hair. I have just enlisted into the navy and have many experiences ahead of me. So if any pen pals wish to write to me I will be glad to correspond with them.

Very truly yours,

Aristotle Pafias.

Naval Training School, Platoon Five, Norfolk, Va.

P. S.—Don't mind the name as I am really a nice fellow.

Dear Editor:

I am wondering if you could find me some real peppy pals through your column for that purpose. I came a long way from home seeking adventure and romance, but to date have found neither. Naturally, I would appreciate peppy pals galore. Specifications: Age 27, height 5 ft. 10 in., weight 170 pounds, complexion dark.

Will enjoy answering any and all letters as "Pep Stories" is not published often enough to occupy my time; your excellent magazine should be published weekly.

Yours truly,

Herman A. Mingea.

Det. Q. M. C., Camp John Hay, Mt. Prov., P. I.

"YOUNG LADY—"

(Continued from page 48)

He swept her up and off her feet.

"You found out where I lived!" he cried.

"Oh, you darling! You darling!"

Jane was dumbfounded until she saw the smiling figure of Walter Allen framed in the doorway of his study, his finger to his lips. Then she understood.

"Right down to City Hall for us!" Dickie shouted. "Jenkins, my coat and hat!"

Walter Allen came out into the foyer. Now he was stern faced. Dickie wheeled Jane around. "Dad, this is Jane Carr!" he blurted. "Soon to be Mrs. Richard Wellington Allen!"

Walter Allen's hand clasped Jane's. In the friendly pressure of his fingers she knew she was being thanked.

"Advertising does pay, doesn't it?" he said softly.

Dickie was much too excited to wonder what the cryptic remark meant. Only Jane knew, and it brought a lump to her throat.

Behind The Office Door

(Continued from page 36)

we're goin' to have a hell of a pile of fun—jus' same's we are—now!"

He was nuzzling the soft hollow at her throat. She struggled vainly, half-heartedly, the room reeling. She could feel his hot, alcoholic breath, his avid, questing fingers wrenching at her garments, pawing her over, striving to crowd her tightly to him. After all—were all men alike?

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She felt herself bent back—her dress, her silken underthings, crowded down around her hips—without any responsive fire, any ecstasy of passion. But, after all, why struggle? Why not have—what he called fun—while you could take it—

Suddenly the avid glare in his eyes, his hot, passionate lips, cleared out of the blur. He was tugging at her garments—she freed one white, rounded arm, and struck fiercely.

Dick Bennett rubbed the red marks on his flushed face. His lips curled in an unpleasant snarl.

"You—you damn little four-flusher! High hat me, will you? To—to hell with you! Next time I ask you—"

She struck again and again. Her dress was a tangle of rumpled silk about her ankles. The room swirled hazily. The door slammed, angry footsteps banged down the corridor. She flung herself face downward on the divan, and hot tears flowed down her cheeks, soaked the pillow, stung her flushed face. The world had crashed about her and left—what? Her throat was bitter, salty, dry—men—

The telephone rang sharply. She let it ring. It jangled on her tortured ears like some persistent, malicious demon. From force of habit she got up and lifted off the receiver. She kicked herself free from the dress that clung about her ankles. She made a futile clutch for the pink wisp that was cascading about her knees. What did it matter?

"Annette? I've been trying to get you all the evening."

The chair felt unpleasantly hard and sticky to her bare flesh. "I thought we settled all that this afternoon."

"We did not! It wasn't till after you'd gone that I realized what a damned fool I'd been! Tried to be smart—and original—thought I was saying things in a new—and unique way—and never realized that I never said a word about a ring—or somebody to say 'I pronounce you man and wife'. Though you didn't really give me a chance to put that in. Drove it all out of my head."

The silken wisp slipped down about her ankles. Impatiently she kicked it free.

"What's that you're saying? A ring—marriage—you, a married man? Are you trying to insult me some more—if it were possible?"

"A married man? What in the world do you mean, Annette?"

"Mrs. Sheffield—your wife—Diana—"
"Diana! Good Lord! Oh, Annette. An-

nette, you thought—you poor child—"

"Certainly I thought—"

"You've worked in my office two years, and you didn't even know that Diana Sheffield is my sister-in-law? I've been looking after her business affairs—taking care of a trust fund for her—"

The walls had crashed about her feet once more. She gasped faintly, clutched the receiver till her knuckles showed white.

"If you had told me—this afternoon. You were so sudden—so rough—you made me think—"

"I wanted to—to make you care—to rouse something in you beside that damned competent, machine-like efficiency—to stir up something under that tailored exterior of yours—"

"You did," she told him with severity. "You almost—plucked my heart out—and played on the strings. I did want you to—to love me—and when you came so near—and I knew I couldn't have you—and I wanted you—so much—"

She could have bitten out her tongue at the confession.

"Say that again, darling!"

"No—no—"

"I'm coming right over, you poor abused angel! I don't care if it is one o'clock in the morning! We have things to settle—and we're going to settle them—darned quick! Just as soon as I can get my car out of the garage—"

Her protests were futile. She was talking to a dead-line. She gazed with frightened eyes about the room. Her huddled dress, her rumpled underthings, lay on the floor at her feet. She was clad only in brassiere and stockings, and in possibly five minutes this masterful, efficient go-getter—her heart leaped in wild exultation. The world was good, after all. Paris—Lac Leman—Nice—love—

She had been so impassively cool—so calmly efficient—she thought of the severely tailored office costume, the uniform of business efficiency. Should she slip that on hastily, greet him as the poised business woman? He had seen her that way every day. No, she would show him another side—one that would kindle those gray eyes into ardent flame.

From a drawer in her chiffonier, she took out a tiny flat box, shook out the folded garment, and with eyes that danced, even though they were a little fearful, she slipped the sheer black chiffon over her shoulders. To greet

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HOLD YOUR MAN!

(Continued from page 7)

push her away, but remained to press the rounded warmth. Alice flattened her breasts against his chest, gave him the nectar moist ripeness of her mouth.

When she drew away, his breath came in short, excited pants. "All right," he gasped. "What is it?"

The thrill of triumph surged through her bosom. She drew him to the couch. "It's all very simple," she explained hurriedly. "You invite Chuck up here tomorrow night. Get him good and drunk. Not so that he can't get around, but just enough to make him feel good . . . and irresponsible. Then suggest that he call Fay Vaughn."

Avery started. "How do you know her?"

"It doesn't matter, I know about her. That's enough. But better yet, you call Fay some time today and arrange for Chuck to go to her hotel room tomorrow night at ten. I'll take care of the rest."

"Framing him," Avery said.

Alice edged close, brushing a jutting breast against his arm. "You can call it off if you care to, but in the long run we'll both be better off." Her eyes invited. "You'll do it for me, Avery, won't you?"

His right hand came out and fondled her breasts. "Yes, I guess so," he panted. "I guess I will."

Slowly, sensuously, she came into his arms. His fingers toyed with the full softness of her, diving into her bodice and reveling in the mature warmth of her melting curves.

"I knew you would," she whispered fervently.

CHUCK EVANS MANAGED somehow to solve the intricacies of the revolving door at the Hotel Williston and make his uncertain way through the lobby. As he neared the elevators, he heard his name called.

"Hello, Chuck."

He turned his gaze into the smiling face of a girl who seemed strangely familiar. Then his eyes saw the shimmering mass of red hair.

"Hello, baby," he replied.

"You're late," the redhead chided. "You were supposed to be here at ten. At least, that's what Avery said when he called. I got tired waiting in the room for you, thought maybe you were lost down here." She took his arm. "Come on up."

Behind a locked door, Chuck became loqua-



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cious. "Damn white of you to remember me, Fay," he mumbled. "Sweet kid." He reached for her, dropping one hand on her hip, the other on a silk sheathed breast.

She came into his arms, her hips swaying with ill-concealed sensuality. "Like me, Chuck?" she whispered.

By way of answer, his mouth swooped down to the poppy red of her lips, and his seeking hand found the valley of her breasts. She tensed against him, every curve melting into the sinewed hardness of his body. Neither of them heard the door open. Chuck whipped around suddenly as a gruff voice broke the panting quiet. There was a boom and a flash.

Two men grinned in the doorway. A camera swung from the right hand of one of them.

Chuck sobered instantly. "What's the idea of all this?" he demanded.

"You're caught with the goods, that's all, Mr. Evans," one of the men replied. "Your wife gave orders to snap one if we could." He grinned. "We could and we did!"

Chuck paled. "My wife?" he gasped. "Alice did this?" His eyes widened. "I—I can't believe it. Where is she? I must talk to her! Do you hear? I must!"

Both men shrugged and stepped out of the room. The redhead slammed the door shut. Chuck looked at her strangely.

"What is it you want to say, Chuck?" she queried, lifting her hand to her head and removing a red wig. Blonde hair tumbled out in disarranged profusion.

His very inarticulateness spoke volumes. His eyes became damp. "Alice!" he mumbled. "Alice!" Broken, he dropped at her feet.

Again victory swelled in her breasts. She knew now she would hold him forever, even at thirty-eight or forty-eight. He was a beaten, whimpering child with his hands clutching her waist. She made a mental note to call Fay Vaughn in the morning. That would make her triumph complete. Now there were other things to do. She knelt down beside Chuck and raised his head. Her lips pressed against his mouth. It was thrilling to know you had your man!



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